AGGRAVATION OF SINNE: AND SINNING Against KNOWLEDGE. MERCIE.

Delivered in severall SERMONS upon divers occasions.

BY

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AGGRA-

AGGRAVATION OF SINNE.

ROM. 7. 13.

Was that then which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But ſinne, that it might appeare ſinne, working death in me by that which is good: that ſinne by the commandement might become exceeding ſinfull.

WEE finde our Apoſtle in the 9. Verſe to have beene alive, but ſtruck upon the ſudden *dead*, by an apparition preſented to him in the glaſſe of the Law, *of the ſinfulneſſe of ſin. Sin revived*, ſayes the 9. Verſe, *appeared to be ſin*, ſayes the 13. verſe, looks but like it ſelfe, *above meaſure ſinfull:* and he falls downe dead at the very ſight of it: *I dyed*, ſayes he in the 9. *it wrought death in me*, ſayes the 13. that is, an apprehenſion of death and hell, as due to that eſtate I was then in. But yet as the life of ſinne was the death of *Paul*, ſo this death of his was but a preparation to a new life, *I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live to God*, Gal. 2.19. and here he likewiſe ſpeakes of Gods worke upon him at his firſt *converſion*; for then it was that he relates how ſinne became in his eſteeme, ſo *above meaſure ſinfull.*

The ſubject then to be inſiſted on is the ſinfulneſſe of ſinne, a ſubject therefore as neceſſary as any other, becauſe if ever we be

ſaved, ſinne muſt firſt appeare to us all, as it did here to him, *above meaſure ſinfull.*

And firſt, becauſe all knowledge begins at the effects which are obvious to ſenſe, and interpreters of the nature of things, therefore we will begin this *Demonſtration* of the evill of ſinne, from the miſchievous effects it hath filled the world withall, it having done nothing but wrought miſchiefe ſince it came into the world, and all the miſchiefe that hath beene done, it alone hath done, but eſpecially towards the poore ſoul of man, the miſerable ſubject of it.

Which firſt it hath debaſed the ſoule of man, the nobleſt creature under heaven, and higheſt allyed, made to be a companion fit for God himſelfe, but ſin hath ſtript it of its firſt native *excellency*, as it did *Reuben*, *Gen.* 49. 41. debaſed the ſoule more worth then all the world, as Chriſt himſelfe ſaith, that onely went to the price of it: yet ſinne hath made it a drudge and ſlave to every creature it was made to rule: therefore the *Prodigall* as a type is ſaid to *ſerve ſwine*, and *feed on huskes*, ſo as every vanity maſters it. Therefore we find in Scripture, that men are ſaid to be *ſervants to wine*, Tit. 2. 3. ſervants to riches, and divers luſts, &c.

And hence it is that *ſhame* attends upon it, *Rom.* 6. 21. Now ſhame ariſeth out of an apprehenſion of ſome excellency debaſed: and by how much the excellency is greater, by ſo much is the ſhame the greater, and therefore unutterable confuſion will one day befall ſinners: becauſe ſinne is the debaſement of an unvaluable excellency.

Secondly, it not onely debaſeth it, but defiles it alſo; and indeed there was nothing elſe that could *defile it*, Mat. 15. 20. for the ſoule is a moſt pure beame, bearing the image of the *Father of lights*: as farre ſurpaſſing the Sunne in pureneſſe, as the Sunne doth a clod of earth; and yet all the dirt in the world cannot defile the Sunne; all the clouds that ſeeke to muffle it, it ſcatters them all: but ſinne hath defiled the ſoule, yea, *one* ſinne, the leaſt defiles it, in an *inſtant*, *totally*, *eternally*.

Firſt, one ſin did it in the fall of *Adam*, Rom. 5. 17. *one offence* polluted him, and all the world. Now ſuppoſe you ſhould ſee one drop of darkneſſe ſeizing on the Sunne, and putting out that light

light and eye of heaven, and to looſen it out of the orbe it moves in, and cauſe it to drop downe a lump of darkneſſe, you would ſay it were a ſtrange darkneſſe: this ſinne did then in the ſoule, to which yet the Sunne is but as a Taper.

Secondly, it defiles it thus *in an inſtant*. Take the moſt glorious Angell in heaven, and let one of the leaſt ſinnes ſeaze upon his heart, he would in an inſtant fall downe from heaven, ſtript of all his glory, the ugliеſt creature that ever was beheld: you would count that the ſtrongeſt of all poyſons, that would poyſon in an inſtant; as *Nero* boiled a poyſon to that height, that it killed *Germanicus* as ſoone as he received it; now ſuch an one is ſinne.

Thirdly, ſinne defiles it *totally*: it reſts not in one member onely, but beginning at the underſtanding, eates into the will and affections, ſoaks through all. Thoſe diſeaſes we account ſtrongeſt, which ſeaze not on a joynt or a member onely, but ſtrikes rottenneſſe through the whole body.

Fourthly, it defiles *eternally*, it being *æterna macula*, a ſtaine which *no nitre or ſope*, or any creature can *waſh out*, Jer. 2. 21. There was once let in a deluge of water, and the world was all over-flow'd with it; it waſhed away ſinners indeed, but not one ſinne. And the world ſhall be a fire againe at the latter day, and all that fire, and thoſe flames in hell that follow, ſhall not purge out one ſinne.

Thirdly, it hath robbed the ſoule of the *image of God*, deprived *us of the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. the image of Gods holineſſe, which is his beauty and ours: wee were beautifull and all glorious once within, which though but an accident, is more worth than all mens ſoules devoid of it, it being a likeneſſe unto God, *a divine nature*, without which no man ſhall ſee God. Though man in Innocencie had all perfections united in him *via eminentiæ*, that are to be found in other creatures, yet this was more worth than all: for all the reſt made him not like to God, as this did; without which all Paradiſe could not make *Adam* happy; which when he had loſt, he was left *naked*, though thoſe his other perfections remained with him; which is *profitable for all things*, as the Apoſtle ſayes. The leaſt dram of which, the whole world emballanced with, would be found too light;

without which the glorious Angels would be damned devils, the Saints in heaven damned ghoſts, this it hath robbed man of.

Fourthly, it hath robbed man even of God himſelfe: *Your ſinnes ſeparate* (ſayes God) *betwixt you and mee:* and therefore they are ſaid to *live without God in the world:* and in robbing a man of God, it robs him of all things; for *all things are ours*, but ſo farre as *God is ours*; of God whoſe face makes heaven, he is all in all; *his loving kindneſſe is better than life*, and containeth beauty, honours, riches, all: yea they are but a drop to him.

But its miſchiefe hath not ſtaid here, but as the *Leproſie of the Lepers* in the old Law, ſometimes infected their houſes, garments; ſo it hath hurld confuſion over all the world, brought *a vanity* on the *creature*, *Rom.* 8. 23. and *a curſe:* and had not Chriſt undertooke the ſhattered condition of the world to uphold it, it had fallen about *Adams* eares.

Gen. 2.

Heb. 1. 2.

And though the old walls and ruinous palace of the world ſtands to this day, yet the beauty, the gloſſe, and glory of the hangings is foyled and marred with many imperfections caſt upon every creature.

But as the houſe of the Leper was to be pulled downe, and Traytors houſes uſe to be made jakes: ſo the world (if Chriſt had not ſtept in) had ſhrunke into its firſt nothing: and you will ſay, that is a ſtrong carrion that retaines not onely infection in it ſelfe, but infects all the ayre about: ſo this, that not the ſoule the ſubject of it onely, but all the world.

Laſtly, it was the firſt founder of hell, and laid the firſt corner ſtone thereof: ſinne alone brought in and filled that bottomleſſe gulph with all the fire, and brimſtone, and treaſures of wrath, which ſhall never be burnt and conſumed. And this crucified and pierced CHRIST himſelfe, powred on him his Fathers wrath, the enduring of which for ſinne, was ſuch, as that all the Angels in heaven had crackt and ſunke under it.

But yet this eſtimate is but taken from the effects of it, the eſſence of it which is the cauſe of all theſe evils, muſt needs have much more miſchiefe in it. Shall I ſpeake the leaſt evil I can ſay of it? *It conteines all evils elſe in it:* therefore *James* 1. 23. the Apoſtle calls it *filthineſſe, and abundance of ſuperfluity*, or excrement

ment as it were, of naughtineſſe: περίαμμα τῆς κακίας. And if ſo tranſcendent, that if all evils were to have an excrement, a ſcum, a ſuperfluity, ſinne is it, as being the abſtracted quinteſſence of all evil. An evil, which in nature and eſſence of it *virtually*, and *eminently*, containes all evils of what kinde ſoever that are in the world; Inſomuch, as in the Scriptures you ſhall find that all the evils in the world, ſerve but to anſwer for it, and to give names to it. Hence ſinne it is called *poyſon*, and ſinners *ſerpents*: ſinne is called *a vomit*, ſinners *dogs*: ſinne the ſtench of graves, and they *rotten ſepulchres*: ſinne *mire*, ſinners *ſowes*: and ſinne *darkneſſe*, *blindneſſe*, *ſhame*, *nakedneſſe*, *folly*, *madneſſe*, *death*, whatſoever is filthy, defective, infective, painfull. Now as the Holy Ghoſt ſayes of *Nabal*, *as is his name, ſo is he*; ſo may we ſay of ſinne: for if *Adam* gave names to all things, according to their nature, much more God, *who calls things as they are*. Surely God would not ſlander ſinne, though it be his onely enemy. And beſides, there is reaſon for this, for it is the cauſe of all evills. God ſowed nothing but good ſeed in the world; *He beheld, and ſaw all things were very good*. It is ſinne hath ſowne the tares: all thoſe evills that have come up, ſorrowes and diſeaſes, both unto men and beaſts. Now whatſoever is in the effect, is *via eminentiæ* in the cauſe. Surely therefore it is to the ſoule of man (the miſerable veſſell and ſubject of it) all that, which poyſon, death, and ſickneſſe is unto the other creatures, and to the body; and in that, it is all theſe to the *ſoule*, it is therefore more than all theſe to it: for *corruptio optimi peſſima*: by how much the ſoule exceeds all other creatures, by ſo much muſt ſinne, which is the corruption, poyſon, death, and ſickneſſe of it, exceed all other evills.

But yet this is the leaſt ill that can be ſaid of it. There is ſecondly ſome further tranſcendent peculiar miſchiefe in it, that is not to be found in all other evills, as will appeare in many Inſtances.

For firſt, all other evills God proclaimes himſelfe the author of, and ownes them all; though ſinne be the meritorious cauſe of all, yet God the efficient and diſpoſing cauſe. *There is no evill in the City but I have done it*. He onely diſclaimeth this, *Jam.* 1. 13. as a baſtard of ſome others breeding, for *he is the Father of lights*, ver. 17.

Secondly, the utmoſt extremitie of the evill of puniſhment God the Sonne under-went, had a cup mingled him of his Father, more bitter than if all the evills in the world had beene ſtrained in, and he dranke it off heartily to the bottome; but not a drop of ſinne, though ſweetned with the offer of all the world, would goe downe with him.

Thirdly, other evills the Saints have choſen and imbraced as good, and refuſed the greateſt good things the world had, as evill, when they came in competition with ſinne. So *Moſes choſe rather to ſuffer, much rather then to enjoy the pleaſures of* ſinne, *Heb.* 11. from 24. to 28. So *Chryſoſtome*, when *Eudoxia* the Empreſſe threatned him: goe tell her, ſayes he, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I feare nothing but ſinne.

Fourthly, take the Devill himſelfe, whom you all conceive to be more full of miſchiefe than all the evils in the world, called therefore in the abſtract *ſpirituall wickedneſſe*, Epheſ. 6. 12. yet it was but ſinne that firſt ſpoiled him, and it is ſinne *poſſeſſeth* the very devills: he was a glorious Angell, till he was acquainted with it: and could there be a ſeparation made betweene him and ſinne, he would be againe of as good, ſweet, and amiable a nature, as any creature in earth or heaven.

Fiftly, Though other things are evill, yet nothing makes the creature *accurſed* but ſinne: as all good things in the world doe not make a man a bleſſed man, ſo nor all the evills accurſed. God ſayes not, bleſſed are the honourable, and the rich, nor that accurſed are the poore: but *curſed is the man that continues not in all things*, Gal. 3. 10. a curſe to the leaſt ſinne; and on the contrary, *bleſſed is the man whoſe iniquities are forgiven, &c.* Rom. 4. 7.

Sixtly, God hates nothing but ſinne. Were all evills ſwept downe into one man, God hates him not ſimply for them, not becauſe thou art poore and diſgraced, but onely becauſe ſinfull. It is ſinne he hates, *Rev.* 2. 15. *Iſa.* 27. 11. yea it alone: and whereas other attributes are diverſly communicated in their effects to ſeverall things: as his love and goodneſſe, Himſelfe, his Sonne, his children, have all a ſhare in: yet all the hatred (which is as large as his love) is ſolely poured out upon, and wholly, and limitted onely unto ſinne.

All

All the queſtion will be what tranſcendency of evill is in the eſſence of it, that makes it above all other evills, and hated, and it onely by God, Chriſt, the Saints, &c. more than any other evill.

Why? It is *enmity with God, Rom.*8.7. abſtracts we know ſpeak eſſences, the meaning is, it is as directly contrary to God, as any thing could be: for contrary it is to God, and all that is his.

As 1. contrary to his eſſence, to his exiſtence, and being God: for it makes men hate him, *Rom.* 1. 30. and *as he that hateth his Brother is a Murtherer*, 1 *Joh.*3.15. ſo he that hateth God may be ſaid to be a murtherer of him, and wiſheth that he were not. *Peccatum eſt Dei-cidium.*

2. Contrary it is to all his attributes, which are his *name*: men are jealous of their names: Gods name is himſelfe; as 1. It makes a man ſlight Gods goodneſſe, and to ſeek happineſſe in the creature, as if he were able to be happy without him. And 2. it depoſeth his ſoveraignty, and ſets up other gods before his face. 3. It contemns his truth, power, and juſtice. And 4. turnes his grace into wantonneſſe.

And as to himſelfe, ſo to what ever is his, or deare to him. Beſides, a King hath three things in an eſpeciall manner deare to him: *His Lawes, his Favorites, his Image ſtampt upon his Coyne*: and ſo hath God.

Firſt, his lawes and ordinances: God never gave Law, but it hath been broken by ſinne; ἀνομία is the definition of it, *The tranſgreſſion of the Law*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. yea it is called deſtroying the Law, *Pſal.* 119. 126. And know, that Gods Law, the leaſt tittle of it, is more deare to him than all the world. For, ere the leaſt tittle of it ſhall be broken, heaven and earth ſhall paſſe. The leaſt ſinne therefore, which is a breach of the leaſt law, is worſe than the deſtruction of the world: and for his worſhip, (as envying God ſhould have any) it turnes his ordinances into ſinne.

Secondly, for his Favourites: God hath but a few poor ones; upon whom becauſe God hath ſet his love, ſinne hath ſet its hatred.

Laſtly, for his Image even in a Mans owne breaſt: the law of the members fights againſt the law of the mind, and endeavoureth to expell it, though a man ſhould be damned for it. *Gal.*5.17.

The

The fleſh (namely ſinne) *luſteth againſt the ſpirit*, for they are contraries. Contrary indeed; for methinks though it hates that Image in others, that yet it ſhould ſpare it in a mans ſelfe, out of ſelf-love; but yet, though a man ſhould be damned, if this image be expelled, it yet laboureth to doe this; ſo deadly is that hatred, a man hares himſelf, as holy, ſo farre as he is ſinfull.

It abounds now ſo high, as our thoughts can follow it no farther: *Divines* ſay, it aſpires unto infinity, the object againſt whom it is thus contrary unto, being God, who is infinite, they tell us, that objectively, ſinne it ſelfe is infinite. Sure I am, the worth of the object or party offended, aggravates the offence: an ill word againſt the King is high treaſon, not the greateſt indignity to another man. Sure I alſo am, that God was ſo offended with it, as, though he loves his Sonne as himſelfe, yet he (though *without ſinne*) being but *made ſinne* by imputation, yet God *ſpared him not*: and becauſe the creatures could not ſtrike a ſtroake hard enough, he himſelfe was *pleaſed to bruiſe him*, *Eſay* 53. 16. *He ſpared not his owne Sonne*, *Rom.* 8. 32. His love might have overcome him, to have paſſed by it to his Sonne; at leaſt a word of his mouth might have pacified him: yet ſo great was his hatred of it, and offence at it, as he powred the vials of his wrath on him: Neither would entreaty ſerve, for *though he cried with ſtrong cries it ſhould paſſe from him*, God would not, til he had outwraſtled it.

And as the perſon offended, aggravates the offence, as before, ſo alſo the perſon ſuffering, being God and man, argues the abounding ſinfulneſſe of it. For, for what crime did you ever hear a King was put to death? their perſons being eſteemed in worth above all crime, as civill. CHRIST was the *King of Kings*.

And yet there is one conſideration more to make the meaſure of its iniquity fully full, and to abound to flowing over, and that is this, that the leaſt ſinne virtually more or leſſe containes all ſinne in the nature of it (I meane not that all are equall, therefore I adde more or leſſe) and I prove it thus: becauſe *Adam* by one offence contracted the ſtaine of all, no ſooner did one ſinne ſeaze upon his heart, but he had all ſinnes in him.

And ſo every ſin in us by a miraculous multiplication inclines our nature more to every ſinne than it was before: it makes the pollution

pollution of nature of a deeper dye; not only to that ſpecies of ſinne, whereof it is the proper individuall act, but to all elſe: as bring one candle into a roome, the light ſpreads all over; and then another, the light is all over more increaſed: So it is in ſin; for the leaſt cuts the ſoul off from God, and then it is ready to go a whoring after every vanity that wil entice it, or entertain it.

And this ſhewes the fulneſſe of the evill of it, in that it containes not onely all other evills in the world in it, but alſo all of its owne kind. As you would count that a ſtrange poyſon, the leaſt drop of which contains the force of all poyſon in it: That a ſtrange diſeaſe, the leaſt infection whereof brought the body ſubject to all diſeaſes: yet ſuch an one is ſin, the leaſt making the ſoul more prone and ſubject to all.

And now you ſee it is a perfect evill; and though indeed it cannot be ſaid to be the chiefeſt in that full ſenſe wherein God is ſaid to be the chiefeſt good; becauſe if it were as bad as God is good, how could he pardon it, ſubdue it, bring it to nothing as he doth? and then how could it have addition to it, one ſinne being more ſinfull than another? *Ezek.*8.15. *Joh.*19.11. But yet it hath ſome analogy of being the chiefeſt evill, as God the chiefeſt good.

For 1. as God is the chiefeſt good, who therefore is to be loved for himſelf, and other things but for his ſake; ſo alſo is ſin the chiefeſt evil, becauſe it is ſimply to be avoided for its ſelf; but other evils become good, yea deſirable when compared with it.

Secondly, as God is the chiefeſt good, becauſe he is the greateſt happineſſe to himſelf; ſo ſin, the greateſt evil to it ſelf: for there can be no worſe puniſhment of it, than its ſelf; therefore when God would give a man over as an enemy, he means never to deal withall more, he gives him up to ſin. Rom. 1.

And thirdly, it is ſo evil, as it cannot have a worſe *Epithete* given it, than it ſelf; and therefore the Apoſtle, when he would ſpeak his worſt of it, and wind up his expreſſion higheſt, *uſque ad hyperbolem*, calls it by its own name, ſinfull ſinne, ἁμαρτωλὸς ἁμαρτία, *Rom.*7.13. that as in God being the greateſt good, *quicquid eſt in Deo eſt Deus ipſe*, therefore his attributes and names are but himſelf, *idem prædicatur de ſeipſo:* ſo it is with ſin, *quicquid eſt in peccato, peccatum eſt, &c.* he can call it no worſe than by its own name, *ſinfull ſin.*

Use I.

And what have I been ſpeaking of all this while? Why? but of one ſinne in the generall nature of it. There is not a man here, but hath millions of them; as many as the ſands upon the Sea-ſhore; yea, as there would be Atoms, were all the world pounded to duſt, it exceeds in number alſo; and therefore ere we goe any further, let all our thoughts break off here in wonderment at the abounding of ſinne, above all things elſe; for other things, if they be great, they are but a few; if many, they are but ſmall: the world, tis a big one indeed, but yet there is but one; the ſands, though innumerable, yet they are but ſmall; your ſinfulneſſe exceeds in both.

And next, let all our thoughts be wound up to the moſt deep and intenſe conſideration of our eſtates; for if one ſin abounds thus, what tongue can expreſſe, or heart can conceive their miſery, who to uſe the Apoſtles phraſe, 1 *Cor.* 15. *are yet in their ſinnes?* that is, ſtand bound to God in their owne ſingle bond only, to anſwer for all their ſinnes themſelves; and cannot, in the eſtate wherein yet they ſtand of impenitency and unbelief, plead the benefit of Chriſts death, to take off and eaſe them of the guilt of one ſin, but all their ſins are yet all their own, which to a man in Chriſt they are not; for his own bonds are cancelled, and given in, and Chriſt entred into bonds for him, and all his ſins tranſlated upon him.

Now for a proper character of their eſtate, and ſutable to this expreſſion:

Firſt, then a mans ſins may be ſaid to be ſtill his own: when he committeth ſin, *out of his own*, that is the full frame and inclination of his heart. Thus the Devill is ſaid to ſin, *Joh.* 8.44. ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων, *out of his own*; the whole frame of his ſpirit is in it; which a man in Chriſt cannot be ſo fully ſaid to doe, for he hath a new creature in him *that ſinneth not*, 1 Joh. 3.1,9. that can ſay even when he ſins, *It is not I, but ſinne.*

And ſecondly, then ſinne is a mans own, when he hates it not, but loves it: *The World loves his owne*, ſaith Chriſt, *John.* 15. 29. and ſo doth a wicked man his ſin, *more than any good*; which is *Davids* character, *Pſal.* 52.3. And

And thirdly, what is a mans own, he nouriſheth and cheriſheth; therefore *Epheſ.* 5.19. *No man hates his own fleſh, but loveth it, and cheriſheth it:* ſo doe men their ſins, when they are their own. Thoſe great and rich oppreſſours, *Jam.* 5.5. are ſaid to *nouriſh their hearts in wantonneſſe*, and in pleaſure, *as in a day of ſlaughter*; as living upon the creame of ſinning, and having ſuch p'enty, they pick out none but the ſweeteſt bits to nouriſh their hearts withall.

4. So what a man *provides* for, that is his owne; ſo ſayes the Apoſtle, *A man that provides not for his owne, is worſe, &c.* When therefore men *make proviſion for the fleſh*, as the *phraſe* is, *Rom.* 13.14. have their Caterers and Contrivers of their luſts, and whoſe chiefeſt care is every morning, what pleaſures of ſin they have that day to be enjoyed, it is a ſigne that their ſins are their owne.

In a word, when men live in ſinne, 'tis the expreſſion uſed, 1 *Tim.* 5.6. *She that lives in pleaſure, is dead while ſhe lives.* When the revenews of the comfort of mens lives come in, from the pleaſures of ſinne, and that ſupplies them with all thoſe neceſſaries that belong to life; as when 'tis their element they *drink in like water*; their meat, *they eat the bread of wickedneſſe*, *Prov.* 1.7. and it goes downe, and troubleth them not; their ſleep alſo, *they cannot ſleep till they have done* or contrived ſome *miſchiefe*, ver. 16. their apparell, as when *violence and oppreſſion covers them as a garment*, and *pride compaſſeth them as a chaine*, Pſal. 73. their recreation alſo, *It is a paſtime for a fool to doe wickedly*, he makes ſport and brags of it, *Prov.* 10.23. yea their health, being *ſick* and diſcontented, when their luſts are not ſatisfied, as *Ahab* was for *Naboths* Vineyard; *Amnon grew leane*, when he could not enjoy his Paramore.

All theſe, as they live in their ſinnes here, and ſo are dead whilſt they live, and ſo are miſerable, making the greateſt evill their chiefeſt good; ſo when they come to die (as we all muſt do one day) and how ſoone, and how ſuddenly we know not; we carry our ſoules, our precious ſoules, as precious water in a brittle glaſſe, ſoone cracked, and then we are *ſpilt like water*, *which none can gather up againe*; or but as a candle in a paper lanthorne; in clay walls, full of cranyes, often but a little cold 2 Sam. 14.14.

comes in, and blowes the candle out; and then, without a through change of heart before, wrought from all ſinne, to all godlineſſe, they will *die in their ſinnes*. And all, and the utmoſt of all miſeries is ſpoken in that one word: and therefore *Chriſt*, when he would ſumme up all miſeries in one expreſſion, tells the *Phariſees* they ſhould *die in their ſinnes*, Joh. 8.28.

USE II.

AND let us conſider further, that if ſinne be thus above meaſure ſinfull, that *Hell that followeth death*, is then likewiſe above meaſure fearfull. And ſo it is intimated to be a puniſhment *without meaſure*, *Jer.*30.11. compared with *Iſa.* 27. *Puniſh them as I puniſh thee* (ſayes God to his owne) *but I will puniſh thee in meaſure*. And indeed, ſinne being committed againſt God, *the King of Kings*, it can never be puniſhed enough. But as the killing of a King, is amongſt men a crime ſo hainous, that no tortures can exceed the deſert of it: we uſe to ſay, all *torments* are too little, any death too good for ſuch a crime. Now *Peccatum eſt Dei cidium*, as I ſaid before, a deſtroying God as much as in us lies: and therefore none but God himſelf can give it a full puniſhment: therefore it is called *a falling into Gods hands*, Heb.10.31. which, as he ſayes there, is *fearfull*. For if his *breath* blowes us *to deſtruction*, *Job* 4.9. for we are but *duſt heaps*; yea, his nod, *he nods to deſtruction*, *Pſal.* 80.16. then what is the weight of his hands, even of thoſe hands, *which ſpan the heavens, and hold the earth in the hollow of them?* and if God take it into his hands to puniſh, he will be ſure to doe unto the full. *Sinne* is *mans worke*, and *puniſhment* is *Gods*, and *God* will ſhew himſelf as *perfect* in *his work*, as *man* in *his*.

Iſay 40.

If ſin be *malum catholicum*, as hath been ſaid, that containes all evills in it; then the puniſhment God will inflict ſhall be *malum catholicum* alſo, containing in it all miſeries; it is a *cup full of mixture*, ſo called, *Pſal.*75.8. as into which God hath ſtrained the quinteſſence of all miſeries, and *the wicked of the earth muſt drink the dregges of it*, though it be eternity unto the bottome. And if one ſinne deſerves a hell, a puniſhment above meaſure, what

what will millions of millions doe? And we read that *every ſinne ſhall receive a juſt recompence*, Heb. 2. 3. Oh let us then take heed of dying in our ſinnes, and therefore of living in them; for we ſhall lie in priſon till we have paid the very utmoſt farthing.

And therefore if all this that I have ſaid of it will not engender anſwerable apprehenſions of it in you, (this being but painting the toad, which you can look upon and handle without affrightment) I wiſh that if without danger you could but lay your eares to hell, that ſtanding as it were behind the skreene, you might heare ſinne ſpoken of in its owne dialect by the oldeſt ſonnes of perdition there, to heare what *Cain* ſayes of murthering his brother *Abel*; what *Saul* of his perſecuting *David*, and the Prieſts of *Jehovah*; what *Balaam* and *Achitophel* ſay of their curſed counſels and policies; what *Ahab* ſayes of his oppreſſion of *Naboth*; what *Judas* of treaſon; and heare what expreſſions they have, with what horrors, yellings, groanes, diſtractions, the leaſt ſinne is there ſpoken of. If God ſhould take any mans ſoule here, and as he rapt His, into the third heavens, where he ſaw grace in its fulleſt brightneſſe; ſo carry any ones ſoule into thoſe *chambers of death*, as *Solomon* calls them, and leading him through all, from chamber to chamber, ſhew him the *viſions* of *darkneſſe*, and he there heare all thoſe bedlames cry out, one of this ſinne, another of that, and ſee ſinne as it looks in hell! But there is one aggravation more of the evil and miſery ſinne brings upon men, I have not ſpoken of yet, that it blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts, that they doe not ſee, nor lament their miſery, till they be in hell, and then it is too late.

Use III.

But what, doth ſinne ſo exceed in ſinfulneſſe, and is the venome of it boyled up to ſuch a height of miſchief, that there ſhould be no name in heaven and earth able to grapple with it, and deſtroy it? Is there no antidote, no balme in *Gilead* more ſoveraigne, than it is deadly? Surely yes, God would never have ſuffered ſo potent and malicious an enemy to have ſet foot in his dominions, but that he knew how to conquer it, and that

not by puniſhing of it onely in hell, but by deſtroying it: onely it is too potent for all the creatures to encounter with. This victory is alone reſerved for *Chriſt*, it can die by no other hand, that he may have the glory of it; which therefore is the top of his glory, as Mediatour; and his higheſt title, the memory of which he beares written in his name JESUS, *for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſinnes*, Mat. 1. 21. And therefore the Apoſtle *Paul*, his chiefeſt Herauld, proclaimes this victory with a world of ſolemnity and triumph, 1 *Cor.* 15. 36. *Oh death, where is thy ſting? oh grave, where is thy victory? the ſting of death is ſinne, the ſtrength of ſinne is the Law: but thanks be to God that gives us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* which yet againe addes to the *Demonſtration of the ſinfulneſſe of it:* for the ſtrength of ſinne was ſuch, that like *Goliah*, it would have defied the whole Hoſt of heaven and earth. *It was not poſſible the blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away ſinne*, Heb. 10. 4. nor would the riches of the world, or the blood of men have been a ſufficient ranſome: *Will the Lord be pleaſed with rivers of oyle? ſhall I give my firſt borne for my tranſgreſſion?* No, ſayes he, there is no proportion, for thy firſt borne is but the fruit of thy body, and ſinne is the *ſinne of the ſoule*, Mich. 6. 7. it muſt coſt more to redeeme a ſoule than ſo, *Pſal.* 49. 9. No, couldeſt thou bring rivers of teares, in ſtead of rivers of oyle; which, if any thing, were like to pacifie God, yet are they but the excrements of thy braines; but ſinne is the ſinne of thy heart: yea all the righteouſneſſe that we could ever doe, cannot make amends for one ſinne: for ſuppoſe it perfect, when as yet it is but *dung*, Mal. 2. 3. and a *menſtruous cloath*, yet thou oweſt it already as thou art a creature; and one debt cannot pay another. If then we ſhould goe a begging to all the Angels, who never ſinned, let them lay all their ſtock together, it would begger them all to pay for one ſinne: no, it is not the merit of Angels will doe it; for ſinne is the tranſgreſſion, the deſtruction of the Law, *Pſal.* 109. 1. and the leaſt ψυχὴ is more worth than heaven, and all that is therein.

Onely, though it be thus unconquerably ſinfull by all created powers, it hath not gone beyond the price that Chriſt hath paid for it; the Apoſtle compares to this very purpoſe, *ſinne* and *Chriſts righteouſneſſe* together, *Rom.* 5. 15. 20. 'Tis true, ſayes he, that

that *ſinne abounds*, and that *one ſinne*, τὸ παράπτωμα, and inſtanceth in *Adams* ſinne, which ſtaineth all mens natures to the end of the world; yet ſayes he, the *gift of righteouſneſſe by Chriſt abounds much more*; abounds to flowing over, ὑπερπλεόνασε, ſayes the Apoſtle, 1 Tim. 1. 14. *as the Sea doth above mole-hills*, Mal. 7. 14. Though therefore it would undoe all the Angels, yet *Chriſts riches are unſearchable*, Epheſ. 3. 8. he hath ſuch riches of merit, as are able to pay all thy debts the very firſt day of thy marriage with him, though thou hadſt been a ſinner millions of yeares, afore the creation to this day: and when that is done, there is enough left to purchaſe thee more grace and glory than all the Angels have in heaven. In a word, he is *able to ſave to the utmoſt, all that come to God by him*, Heb. 7. 5. let their ſinnes be what they will.

But then we muſt *come* to him, and *to God by him*, and take him as our Lord, and King, and head, and husband, as he is freely tendered, we muſt be made one with him, and have our hearts divorced from all our ſinnes for ever. And why not now? doe we yet looke for another Chriſt? and to allude to us, as *Naomi* ſaid to *Ruth*, Is there yet any more ſonnes in my wombe, that they may be your husbands? So ſay I, Hath God any more ſuch ſonnes? or is not this Chriſt good enough? or are we afraid of being happy too ſoone, in being married to him?

But yet if we will have Chriſt indeed (without whom we are undone) *how ſhall we then continue in ſinne*, which is thus above meaſure ſinfull? no not in one. The Apoſtle ſpeakes there in the language of impoſſibility and inconſiſtency. Chriſt, and the reigne of one ſinne, they cannot ſtand together. Rom. 6.

And indeed, we will not ſo much as take Chriſt, untill firſt we have ſeen more or leſſe this viſion here, and ſinne appeare to us, as to him, above meaſure ſinfull: naturally we ſlight it, and make a mock of, and account it preciſeneſſe to ſtick and make conſcience of it: but if once ſinne thus appeares to any but in its owne colours, that man will looke upon the leaſt ſinne then, as upon hell it ſelfe; and like a man affrighted, feare in all his wayes, leſt he ſhonld meet with ſinne, and ſtarts at the very appearance of it; he weeps if ſinne doe but ſee him, and he doe but ſee it in himſelf and others; and cries out as *Joſeph* did, *How ſhall I doe*

this,

this, and ſinne? and then a man will make out for Chriſt, as a condemned man for life, as a man that can no longer live, *Oh give me Chriſt, or elſe I die*; and then if upon this Chriſt appeares to him; and *manifeſts himſelfe*, as his promiſe is to them that ſeek him, *John* 14. 21. his heart thereupon will much more deteſt and loathe it: he ſaw it evill afore, but then it comes to have a new tincture added, which makes it infinitely more ſinfull in his eyes; for he then lookes upon every ſinne as guilty of Chriſts blood, as dyed with it, though *covered by it*; *the grace of God appearing, teacheth us to deny all ungodlineſſe and worldly luſts. The love of Chriſt conſtraines him.* Thinks he, Shall I live in that for which Chriſt died? ſhall that be my life, which was his death? did he that never knew ſinne, undergoe the torment for it, and ſhall I be ſo unkinde as to enjoy the pleaſure of it? No, but as *David* when he was very thirſty, and had water of the Well of *Bethlehem* brought him, with the hazard of mens lives, powred it on the ground; for ſayes he, *It is the blood of theſe men*: So ſayes he, even when the cup of pleaſures is at his very lips, It coſt the blood of Chriſt, and ſo powres it upon the ground. And as the love of Chriſt conſtraines him, ſo the power of Chriſt doth change him. Kings may pardon Traytors, but they cannot change their hearts; but Chriſt pardons none, he doth not make new creatures, and all *old things paſſe away*, becauſe he makes them friends, favourites to live with, and delight in; and if men *put on Chriſt, and have learned him, as the truth is in Jeſus, they put off as concerning the former converſation the old man, With the deceitfull luſts*; and he *ceaſeth from ſinne*, that is, from the courſe of any known ſinne: they are the Apoſtles own words which ſhall judge us; and if we ſhould expect ſalvation from him upon any other termes, we are deceived; for *Chriſt is the author of ſalvation to them onely that obey* him, *Heb.* 5. 9.

1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.

AGGRA-

AGGRAVATIONS OF SINNING AGAINST KNOVVLEDGE:

BY

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AGGRA-

AGGRAVATIONS OF SINNING AGAINST *KNOWLEDGE.*

ROM. 1. 21.

Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankfull, but became vaine in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned.

THere are two generall aggravations the Apoſtle inſiſts on, in theſe two Chapters, of the Gentiles ſinfulneſſe: Firſt, their *unthankfulneſſe*, ver. 21. in *deſpiſing the riches of Gods goodneſſe*, Chap. 2. 4. Secondly, of *Rebellion*, in ſinning *againſt knowledge: That when they knew him, they glorified him not as God.* And of all other he inculcateth this of ſinning againſt knowledge, as the greateſt: for bringing in a long, large, and particular indictment of many ſeverall ſinnes, *Idolatry*, v. 23. *unnaturall uncleanneſſe*, v. 26. *&c.* and all *kinds of unrighteouſneſſe*, v. 29. he doth both in the beginning, and end of the bill, bring in this aggravation, that *they ſinned* againſt knowledge in all theſe. So *v.* 18. he begins the indictment and promulgation of Gods wrath above all for this, that *they with-held the truth in unrighteouſneſſe*; which was as much as all that unrighteouſneſſe committed, barely in it ſelfe conſidered: And then againe in the end, when he comes to pronounce ſentence, he comes in with this, after

after all particulars had been reckoned up, *Who knowing the judgment of God againſt thoſe which doe ſuch things, yet doe them.*

Doct. To ſin againſt knowledge, is the higheſt aggravation of ſinning.

So that this Doctrine is cleare from hence, That *to ſin againſt knowledge*, either in omitting good duties, which we know we ought to performe, or committing of ſinnes we know we ought not to doe, *is the higheſt aggravation* of ſinfulneſſe.

I put both in both ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion: for ſo the particular ſins the *Gentiles* are taxed for here, are of both ſorts; as *not glorifying*, or *worſhipping God*, as well as *turning his glory into a lye, &c.* to omit prayer, when your conſciences tell you, you ought to doe it: to omit holy diſcourſe, examining the heart, when you know you ought to doe them, are as well ſins againſt knowledge, as to tell a lie againſt your knowledge, or as to ſteale and forſweare, or murder, or be drunke, &c.

Now when I ſay, it is an aggravation to theſe ſinnes, my meaning is this: That take any ſinne thou thinkeſt moſt groſſe, and view it barely in the act of it, put the act nakedly in the one ſcale, be it a ſinne of uncleanneſſe, or drunkenneſſe; and then put this circumſtance which was added to it in the other ſcale, that before and when thou diddeſt it, thou kneweſt it to be a ſinne, this alone weighs as much, yea more than the ſinne it ſelfe doth: that as it is ſaid of *Herod*, that *he added this to all his other ſinnes, that he caſt John in priſon*, who told him of his *Herodias*, and ſo is made as much as all his former ſinnes: ſo is this brought in here, that in and unto all their unrighteouſneſſe, this was added, *they With-held the truth*, the light of their conſciences (which is as a Prophet from God) they did impriſon *in unrighteouſneſſe*, v. 18. And therefore when *Daniel* would convince *Balſhazzar* of his deſervedneſſe to loſe his Kingdome, and that he was not able to *hold weight in the ballance*, Dan. 5. 22. what puts he into the other ſcale againſt him to weigh him up, and to ſhew he was *too light*, ver. 21, 22? he tells him how his *Father knew the God of heaven*, and how *that* his knowledge coſt him ſeven yeares the learning among wilde beaſts, and *thou* (ſayes he) *his Sonne kneweſt all this, and yet didſt not humble thy ſelfe.* Here is the aggravation weighs downe all: he knew the God of Heaven againſt whon he ſinned, and that judgement on his Father for his pride; and then withall he tels him, that *this God*,

in

in whose hands is thy breath, and all thy wayes, thou hast not glorified.

I name this place among many others, because it is parallel with this in the Text. Ile name no more, but give *reasons* and *demonstrations* for it.

First, *Demonstrations.*

1. Demonstrations of the point, by comparing it with other kinds of sinning.

The greatnesse of this kind of sinning might many wayes be made appear; we will demonstrate it only by comparing it with other kinds of sinning.

To sinne, though out of *simple ignorance*, when that ignorance is but the *causa sine qua non*, of sinning, that is, so as if a man had known it a sinne, he had not done it, doth not yet make the fact not to be a sinne, though it lesseneth it. For *Luke* 12.48. *He that did not know his Masters will, was beaten*, when the thing committed was worthy of stripes, though he did not know so much, because the thing deserves it. And the reason is, because the Law being once promulged, as 1. to *Adam* it was, and put into his heart, as the common Arke of mankind; though the Tables be lost, yet our ignorance doth not make the Law of none effect. For the *Law of nature* for ever binds, that is, all that was written in *Adams* heart, because it was thereby then published in him, and to him for us. But *positive Lawes*, as I may call them, as to *beleeve in Christ, &c.* anew delivered, bind not, but where they are published. *Josiah* rent his clothes, when the book of the Law was found, because the ordinances were not kept, although they had not knowne the Law of many yeares; yet because they ought to have known it, therefore for all their ignorance, he feared wrath would come upon all *Israel.* So also *Levit.* 5.17. sinnes of ignorance were to be sacrificed for: yet however, it lesseneth the sinne, therefore *he shall be beaten with few stripes.*

And sure, if ignorance lesseneth them, knowledge aggravates; for *contrariorum eadem est ratio*: therefore *he that knows, shall be beaten with many stripes.* Yea such difference is there that God is said to *winke* at sins of *ignorance.* Act. 17. 30. *The time of this ignorance God winks at.* Whiles they had no knowledge, God took no notice: yea, and he abates something for

ſuch ſinnes, becauſe the creature hath *a cloak*, hath ſomething to ſay for its ſelfe; (as Chriſt ſayes, *John* 15. 22.) but when againſt knowledge, they have no cloak. Yea farther, *Chriſt* makes a *ſinne of ignorance to be no ſinne*, in compariſon: So there, *If I had not ſpoken and done thoſe workes never man did, they had had* [*no ſinne*] (That is) none in compariſion, but *now they have no cloake*, no ſhelter to award the ſtripes, or plea to abate of them.

How much ſins againſt knowledge do tranſcend ſins of ignorance.

1. In ſins of ignorance there may be a ſuppoſition, if he had knowne it, he would not have done it: but not ſo in theſe.

And that you may ſee the ground of this vaſt difference between ſinnes of ignorance, and againſt knowledge; Conſider firſt, that if a man ſinne (ſuppoſe the act the ſame) out of *ignorance* meerly, there may be a ſuppoſition, that if he had knowne it, he would not have done it; and that as ſoon as he doth know it, he would or might repent of it. So 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *If they had knowne, they had not crucified the Lord of Glory.* The like ſayes Chriſt of *Tyre*, *Sidon*, and *Gomorrha*, *That if the ſame things had been done in them, they would have repented.* But now when a man knowes it afore and alſo conſiders it in the very committing it, and yet doth it, then there is no roome for ſuch a ſuppoſition, and leſſe hope. For what is it that ſhould reduce this man to repentance? is it not his knowledge? now if that had no power to keep him from his ſin, then it may be judged, that it will not be of force to bring him to repentance for it; for by ſinning the heart is made more hard, and the knowledge and the authority of it weakned and leſſened, as all power is, when contemned and reſiſted, *Rom.* 1. 21. *Their fooliſh heart becomes darker.* *Ariſtotle* himſelf hath a touch of this notion in the third of his Ethicks, that if a man ſinne out of *ignorance*, when he knowes it, he repents of it; if out of *paſſion*, when the paſſion is over, he is ſorry for what he hath done: but when a man ſinnes deliberately, and out of knowledge, it is a ſigne he is fixed and ſet in miſchief; and therefore it is counted wickedneſſe and malice. And hence it is, that thoſe that have been *enlightned* with the higheſt kind of light, but that of ſaving grace, *Heb.* 6. 4. 5. and *Heb.* 10. *If they ſinne wilfully* after ſuch a knowledge of the truth, God lookes on them, as thoſe that will never repent. And therefore likewiſe the School gives this as the reaſon why the Devils ſinne obſtinately, and can-

cannot repent, becauſe of their full knowledge they ſinne with; they know all in the full latitude that it may be known, and yet goe on.

Secondly, The vaſt difference that in Gods account is put between *ſinnes of knowledge*, and of *ignorance*, will appear by the different reſpect and regard that God hath to them, in the repentance he requires and accepts for them; and that both in the acts of repentance, and alſo in the ſtate of grace and repentance, upon which God accepts a man, or for want of which he rejecteth him.

2. The vaſt difference betweene them, appeares in the repentance God accepts for each. A generall repentance for the one, not ſo for the other.

Firſt, When a man comes to performe the acts of repentance, and to humble himſelfe for ſinne, and to turne from it, God exacteth not, that ſinnes of ignorance ſhould particularly be repented of. But if they be repented of but in the generall, and in the lump, be they never ſo great, God accepts it. This is intimated, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errour? cleanſe me from my ſecret ſinnes:* that was confeſſion enough. But ſinnes of knowledge muſt be particularly repented of, and confeſſed, and that againe and againe, as *David* was forced to doe for his murther and adultery, or a man ſhall never have pardon. Yea farther, greater difference will appear, in regard of the ſtate of grace and repentance: for a man may lie in a ſinne he doth not know to be a ſinne, and yet be in the ſtate of *Grace*, as the *Patriarchs* in *Poligamy*, and in divorcing their wives: *but to lie in a ſinne of knowledge*, is not compatible *with grace:* but unleſſe a man maintaineth a conſtant fight againſt it, hateth it, confeſſeth it, forſaketh it, he cannot have mercy. This cannot ſtand with uprightneſſe of heart. A friend may keep correſpondency with one, he ſuſpects not to be an enemy unto his friend, and be true to his friendſhip notwithſtanding: but if he knowes him to be an enemy, he muſt break utterly with the one, if he leanes to the other.

Thirdly, Yet farther in the third place, ſo vaſt is the difference, that ſome kind of ſinnes committed out of, and againſt knowledge, utterly exclude from mercy for time to come; which done out of ignorance, remained capable of, and might have ob-

3. Some kinds of ſinning againſt knowledge exclude from mercy, which done ignorantly leave a capacity of it.

tained it; as *perſecuting the Saints, blaſpheming Chriſt, &c. Pauls* will was as much in thoſe acts themſelves, and as hearty as thoſe that ſinne againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*: for he was *mad* againſt the Church, and in theſe ſinnes, as himſelf ſayes, not ſinning willingly herein onely, but being carried on with *fury* as hot and as forward as the *Phariſees* that ſinned that ſinne: onely ſayes he, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *I did it ignorantly, therfore I obtained mercy.* Though it was *ignorantly* done, yet there was *need of mercy*; but yet in that he did it but ignorantly, there was a capacity and place *for mercy* which otherwiſe had not been. But thus to ſinne *after a man hath received the knowledge of the truth*, ſhuts a man out from mercy, *Heb.* 10. and *there is no more ſacrifice for ſinne, for ſuch ſinnes*; I ſay, ſuch ſinnes as theſe, thus directly againſt the Goſpel, when committed with knowledge. For ſinnes againſt the Law, though againſt knowledge, there was an atonement, as appeares, *Levit.* 6. from the 1. verſe to the 8. where he inſtanceth in *forſwearing*: But *to perſecute the Saints*, and *Chriſts truth, with malice*, after knowledge of it, *there is no more ſacrifice*: not that ſimply the ſinne is ſo great in the act it ſelfe of perſecution, for *Paul* did it out of ignorance; but becauſe it is out of knowledge: ſo vaſt a difference doth knowledge and ignorance put between the guilt of the ſame ſinne.

4. Sinning againſt knowledge is the higheſt to ſinning againſt the holy Ghoſt.

And therefore indeed, to conclude this in the laſt place, this is the higheſt ſtep of the ladder, next to turning off: the very higheſt but of ſinning againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*: which muſt needs argue it the higheſt aggravation of ſinning, when it aſcends ſo high, when it brings a man to the brinck, and next to falling into the bottomleſſe pit, irrecoverably. And therefore to *ſinne preſumptuouſly* (which is all one) and to *ſinne againſt knowledge*, (as appeares, *Numb.* 15. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. it being there oppoſed to ſinning out of ignorance, (ſuch a ſinne as *David* did, of whom it is ſaid, 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. *That he deſpiſed the word of the Lord*: which phraſe alſo is uſed to expreſſe ſinnes of preſumption, *ver.* 31. of that 15. of *Numbers.*) To *ſinne*, I ſay, *preſumptuouſly*, is the higheſt ſtep: So in *Davids* account, *Pſal.* 19. 12, 13. For firſt he prayes, *Lord keepe me from ſecret ſinnes*, (which he maketh ſinnes of ignorance) and then next he prayes againſt *preſumptuous ſinnes*, (which, as the oppoſition

ſition ſhewes, *are ſinnes againſt knowledge:*) For (ſayes he) *if they get dominion over me, I ſhall not be free from* [*that great offence.*] That is, that unpardonable ſinne, which ſhall never be forgiven; ſo as theſe are neareſt it of any other: yet not ſo, as that every one that falls into ſuch a ſinne commits it, but he is nigh to it, at the next ſtep to it. For to commit that ſinne, but *two things* are required; *light* in the *minde*, and *malice* in the *heart*: not *malice* alone, unleſſe there be *light*; for then that Apoſtle had ſinned it: ſo as knowledge is the Parent of it, *It is after receiving the knowledge of the truth*, Heb. 10. 27, 28.

These are the *Demonſtrations* of it, the *Reaſons* are

Secondly, Reaſons, which are ſix, 1. Becauſe knowledge is the greateſt mercy.

Firſt, Becauſe knowledge of God and his wayes, is the greateſt mercy, next to ſaving grace: *He hath not dealt* [*ſo*] *with every Nation.* Wherein? *In giving the knowledge of his Wayes:* and as it is thus, ſo to a Nation, ſo to a Man; and therefore *Chriſt* ſpeaking of the gift of *knowledge*, and giving the reaſon why it ſo greatly condemneth, *Luke* 12. 48. ſayes, *For to whom* [*much*] *is given, much is required.* As if he had ſaid, To know his Maſters will, that is the great talent of all other. There is a [*much*] in that. Thus it was in the Heathens eſteeme alſo: They acknowledged their fooliſh wiſdome in morall and naturall *Philoſophy*, their greateſt *excellency*: and therefore *Plato* thanked God for three things; that he was a *Man*, an *Athenian*, and a *Philoſopher*. And *Rom.* 1. 22. the Apoſtle mentions it as that excellency they did profeſſe. And *Solomon*, of all vanities ſayes this is the beſt vanity, and that it *exceeds folly, as light doth darkeneſſe*, Eccleſ. 2. But ſurely much more is the *knowledge of the Law*, and *of God*, as we have it revealed to us; this muſt needs be much more excellent. And ſo the Jewes eſteemed theirs; as in this ſecond Chap. of the *Romans*, the Apoſtle ſhewes alſo of them, that they *made their boaſt of the Law, and their forme of knowledge of it, and approving the things that are excellent.* And what doe the two great books of the creatures, and the Word, and all meanes elſe ſerve for, but to increaſe knowledge? If therefore all tend to this, this is then the greateſt mercy of all the reſt.

* 2. *Reaſon*, Knowledge is the immediate guide of men in all their wayes. A man ſinnes againſt his Guide

For ſecondly, * God hath appointed knowledge as the immediate guide of men in all their wayes, to *bring* them to *ſalvation*

and repentance, for to *that it leads them.* It is that ſame τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, as the *Philoſopher* call'd it: and therefore the *Law*, Rom. 7. 1, 2. is compared to an *Huſband*, (ſo farre as it is written in, or revealed in the heart) that as an *Huſband is the guide of the wife in her youth*, ſo is the *Law* to the heart. And whereas *beaſts* are ruled *by a bit and bridle*, God he rules men by knowledge. And therefore if men be wicked, notwithſtanding this light, they muſt needs ſinne highly, ſeeing there is no other curbe for them, as they are men, but this: if he will deale with them as men, this is the onely way; and therefore if that will not doe it, it is ſuppoſed nothing will.

It is *knowledge* makes men capable of ſinne, which *beaſts* are not; therefore the more knowledge, (if men be wicked withall) the more ſinne muſt neceſſarily be reckoned to them: ſo as God doth not ſimply look what mens actions and affections are, but chiefly what their knowledge is, and accordingly judgeth men more or leſſe wicked. I may illuſtrate this by that compariſon, which I may allude unto: That as in *Kingdomes*, *God* meaſures out the wickedneſſe thereof, and ſo his puniſhments accordingly, principally, by the guides, the governours thereof, what they are, and what they doe; as in the 5. of *Jeremie*, the 4. verſe it appears; where firſt God lookes upon *the poore* people, *but*, he excuſeth them, *theſe are fooliſh, and know not the way of the Lord*: and therefore God would have been moved to ſpare the Kingdome, notwithſtanding their ſinnes. But from them at the 5. verſe he goes to view the *Rulers*, *I will get me to the great men, for theſe have knowne the way of the Lord*: and when he ſaw that *theſe had broken the bands*, then, *how ſhall I pardon thee for this?* So is it in his judgement towards a particular man: when God lookes downe upon a man, and ſees him in his courſes exceeding looſe, and wicked, he lookes firſt upon thoſe rude affections in him, which are uncleane, prophane, debaucht, greedy of all wickedneſſe; Ay but ſayes he, theſe are fooliſh of themſelves, but I will looke upon his underſtanding, and upon the ſuperiour faculties, which are the guides of theſe affections, and ſee what they dictate to theſe unruly affections, to reſtraine them: And when he finds that the guides themſelves are enlightned, *and have knowne the way of the Lord*, and that the will and the affections, though informed

informed with much knowledge, yet *breake all bands*, then *how ſhall I pardon thee*? *Thee*, who art a knowing drunkard, and a knowing uncleane perſon, &c. ſo as thus to ſinne, aggravates and maketh *ſinne out of meaſure ſinfull*.

That knowledge is ſo proved, in that an erroneous conſcience bindeth

Now that *knowledge* and *reaſon* is a mans *guide*, will further appeare by this: That even *erroneous knowledge* doth put an *obligation*, a *bond*, and a *tie* upon a man: which can be in no other reſpect, but becauſe knowledge is appointed to be a mans guide. Thus if a man thinkes a thing (which is in it ſelf *common* and *indifferent*) to be a *ſinne*, and forbidden, (as *Rom.* 14. 4.) although the *Law* forbids it not, yet *to him it is uncleane*, though *in Chriſt* it is *not uncleane*, that is, by the *Law of Chriſt*. For, this his knowledge and judgement of the thing, hath *to him the force of a Law*: for it propounds it to him as a *Law*, and *as from God*; which *reaſon* of *his*, *God* hath appointed as his *immediate guide*: and the *will* is to follow nothing that is *evill*, which is repreſented to it, as evill; this is the *Law of meer nature* in all conditions; therefore if a man ſhould doe an action which is in it ſelfe good, if he thought it to be evil, he ſhould ſinne, and ſo *è contra*, for he goes againſt the dictate of nature. So that *erroneous knowledge*, though againſt the Law, is a *law to me*, though not *per ſe*, yet *per accidens*. Now therefore if to goe againſt a falſe light of conſcience be yet a ſinne, though it proves that the commandement allowes the thing was done, and was for it, then to goe againſt the true light of the Law, how ſinfull is it?

3. Knowledge layeth a further obligation to obedience.

Againe, thirdly, the knowledge of the Law binds the perſon ſo much the more to obedience, by how much the more he knows it: ſo as though it would be a ſinne, when he knows not the Law to tranſgreſſe it, yet when he knows it, it is a greater ſinne. 'Tis true indeed, that *conſcience* and the *Law*, when they meet, make up but *one Law*, not two diſtinct Lawes: and therefore in *ſinning againſt knowledge*, though a man doth not commit two diſtinct ſinnes, yet the knowledge of it doth adde a further degree of ſinfulneſſe to it: As a cloath is the ſame cloath when it is white, that it was when it is dyed with a ſcarlet dye; yet then it hath a *dye*, a *tincture* given it, which is more worth than the cloath: and ſo when you ſinne, not knowing the Law, the ſinne is the ſame for ſubſtance, it would be if you had knowne it; yet that know-

knowledge dyes it, makes it a *ſcarlet ſinne*, as *Eſay* ſpeaks, farre greater and deeper in demerit, than the ſinne it ſelfe: and the ground of this is, becauſe *Lawes then come to be in force, when they are promulged*, and made knowne: ſo as the *more* they are *promulged* and made knowne, the *more* is the *force* of their *binding*, and ſo the greater *guilt*. Therefore *Deut.* 11. 12. 3. 8. God ſtraitens the cords more, the binding force of the Law more upon thoſe *Jewes* conſciences, to whom he at firſt perſonally with majeſty had promulgated it, than upon their children, though upon theirs alſo. Now if all Gods Lawes, being made knowne to *Adam*, binde us, and are in force, and this when we know them not; then if we doe know them, or might know them, they binde much more: and ſtill the more clearly we know them, the obligation increaſeth, and the guilt inſuing with it: and the rather, becauſe now when we come to know them, they are anew promulged, in a way of a peculiar mercy; we having defaced the knowledge of them in our fall.

Laws come in force whē promulged.

4. There is the more contempt caſt upon the Law.

Fourthly, When the *Law*, being *knowne*, is *broken*, there is the more *contempt* caſt upon the *Law*, and the *Law-giver* alſo; and ſo a higher degree of ſinning. And therefore *Numbers* 15. 30. *He that ſinnes out of knowledge*, is ſaid *to reproach the Lord*, and *to deſpiſe the Word*. And therefore *Saul* ſinning againſt knowledge, *Samuel* calleth it *rebellion*: and though it were but in a ſmall thing, yet he parallels it with witchcraft. So alſo *Job* 24. 13. *they are ſaid to rebell*, when they *ſinne againſt light*; becauſe rebellion is added to diſobedience: For knowledge is an *Officer* ſet to ſee the *Law executed*, and fulfilled; and makes God preſent to the conſcience. Therefore *Rom.* 2. 14. it is called a *Witneſſe*; and therefore in *ſinning againſt knowledge*, men are ſaid to *ſinne before the face of the Lord himſelf*; now what a great contempt is that? Therefore alſo *Pſal.* 50. the *hypocrite ſinning againſt knowledge*, is ſaid to *caſt the law of God behind his back*: ſo as there is a contempt in this ſinning, which is in no other.

5. In ſins againſt knowledge, the will of the ſinner cloſeth more with ſin, as ſinne.

Fiftly, the more *knowledge* a man ſinneth againſt, the more *the Will* of the ſinner is diſcovered to be for *ſinne*, as *ſinne*. Now *voluntarium eſt regula & menſura actionum moralium*: *Willingneſſe in ſinning*, is the *ſtandard and meaſure of ſinnes*. The leſſe will, the leſſe ſinne: ſo much is cut off, the leſſe the will cloſeth with it;

it; at leaſtwiſe ſo much is added, by how much the will is more in it: and therefore the higheſt degree of ſinning is expreſt to us by *ſinning willingly*, and this *after knowledge*, Heb. 10. Now though an ignorant man commits the act as willingly, as when *Paul* perſecuted the Church, yet he commits it not conſidered *as ſinne*, till he hath the knowledge of it: but then when it is diſcovered to be ſinne, and the more clearly it is ſo diſcovered, the will may be ſaid to joyne with it as ſinne. Therefore the Apoſtle ſayes, *To him that knowes to doe well, and doth it not, to him it is ſin*, Jam. 4. 17. becauſe by his knowledge the thing is repreſented as ſin; and ſo he cloſeth with it the more, under that notion and apprehenſion.

Sixthly, In ſinning *againſt knowledge*, a man *condemnes himſelfe*; but when out of *ignorance* meerly, the *Law* onely doth condemne him. So *Rom.* 2. 1. *A man* having *knowledge* in *that wherein he judgeth another, he condemneth himſelfe.* So *Rom.* 14. Now as *ſelf-murder* is the *higheſt* degree of murder, and an aggravation of it; ſo *ſelf-condemning* muſt needs be reckoned. God tooke it as a great advantage over him that hid his talent, that *out of thine owne mouth I will condemne thee, thou wicked ſervant.*

6. In ſinning againſt knowledge a man condemnes himſelf.

The doctrine being thus proved, Firſt, I will explaine, *What it is to ſinne againſt knowledge.*

Secondly, I will give the *aggravations* of it.

Thirdly, I will give *rules* to *meaſure ſinnes of knowledge by*, and the greatneſſe of them in any act.

Laſtly, The uſe of all.

3. Things handled concerning ſins againſt knowledge.

For the firſt, what it is to ſinne againſt knowledge. Firſt, to explaine it, I premiſe theſe diſtinctions.

The firſt diſtinction. That it is one thing to ſinne *with knowledge*, another thing *againſt knowledge.*

1. What it is to ſinne againſt knowledge explained. 1. Diſtinction. To ſinne *with knowledge* and *againſt knowledge*, do differ.

There are many ſinnes doe paſſe from a man *With his knowledge*, which yet are not *againſt knowledge.* This is to be obſerved for the removall of a ſcruple which may ariſe in ſome that are godly, who elſe may be wounded with this doctrine through a miſtake.

A *regenerate man* is, and muſt needs be ſuppoſed guilty of *more knowne ſinnes*, than an *unregenerate man*: and yet he commits *fewer againſt knowledge*, than he.

A regenerate man guilty of more ſinnes *knowne*, than another.

First, I ſay, he is *guilty of more known ſinnes:* For he takes notice of every ſinfull diſpoſition that is ſtirring in him, every by-end, every contrariety unto holineſſe, deadneſſe to duty, reluctancy to ſpirituall duties: and when regenerated, beginneth to ſee and know more evill by himſelfe, than ever he did before: he ſees as the Apoſtle ſayes of himſelfe, *Rom.* 7. 10. *all concupiſcence:* and the holier a man is, the more he diſcerns and knowes his ſinnes: So ſayes the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 7. 18. *I know that in me dwels no good thing.* And ver. 21. *I finde when I would doe good, evill is preſent with me.* And 23. *I ſee another law.* All theſe, he ſayes, he perceived and found daily in himſelfe: and the more holy that he grew, the more he ſaw them. For the purer and clearer the light of Gods Spirit ſhines in a man, the more ſinnes he knowes: he will ſee luſts ſtreaming up, flying in his heart, like moates in the Sunne, or ſparkes out of a furnance, which elſe he had not ſeen: the clearer the Sun-beam is which is let into the heart, the more thou wilt ſee them.

Yet not of more ſinnes againſt knowledge.

But yet in the ſecond place, I adde, that nevertheleſſe he *ſinnes leſſe againſt knowledge:* For then we are properly ſaid to ſinne againſt knowledge, when we doe take the fulfilling of a luſt, or the performance of an outward action, a duty, or the like, into deliberation and conſideration, and conſider motives againſt the ſinne, or to the duty, and yet commit that ſinne, yeeld to it, and nouriſh that luſt, and omit that duty: Here now we ſin not onely *With knowledge*, but *againſt knowledge:* becauſe knowledge ſtept in, and oppoſed us in it, comes to interrupt and prevent us: but now in thoſe failings in duty, and ſtirring of luſts in the regenerate afore mentioned, the caſe is otherwiſe: they are committed indeed with knowledge, but not againſt it: For it is not in the power of knowledge to prevent them: for *motus primo primi non cadunt ſub libertatem*; but yet though ſuch ſinnes will ariſe againe and againe, yet ſayes a good heart, *they muſt not think to paſſe uncontrouled and unſeene:* Therefore let not poor ſoules miſtake me, as if I meant, throughout this diſcourſe, of all ſinnes which are knowne to be ſinnes, but I mean ſuch ſinnes as are committed againſt knowledge: that is, when knowledge comes and examines a ſinne, in, or before the committing of it, brings it to the Law, conteſts againſt it, condemnes it, and yet

yet a man approveth it, and conſenteth to it; when a duty and a ſinne are brought before knowledge, as *Barabbas* and *Chriſt* afore *Pilate*, and thy knowledge doth againe and againe tell thee ſuch a ſinne is a great ſinne, and ought to be crucified, and yet thou cryeſt, let it goe, and ſo for the duty, it tels thee again and again it ought to be ſubmitted unto, and yet thou omitteſt it, and committeſt the ſinne, chooſeſt *Barabbas* rather than *Chriſt*, theſe are ſins againſt knowledge: now ſuch ſins againſt knowledg break a mans peace, and the more conſideration before had, the more the peace is broken.

The ſecond diſtinction is, that men ſin againſt knowledge, either *directly*, or *collaterally*: *objectively*, or *circumſtantially*.

2. Diſtinction. Men ſinne againſt knowledge, either *objectively*, or *circumſtantially* only.

Firſt *directly*, when *knowledge* it ſelfe is the thing men abuſe, or fight againſt, becommeth the *object*, the *terminus*, the butt and marke ſhot at; this is to ſin directly againſt knowledge it ſelfe.

1. What it is to ſinne *directly* againſt knowledge.

The ſecond way, *collaterally*, is, when knowledge is but a *circumſtance* in our ſinnes: ſo as the pleaſure of ſome ſin (we know to be a ſin) is the thing aimed at; and that our knowledge ſteps but in between to hinder us in it, and we commit it notwithſtanding, *though we doe know it*; here knowledge is indeed ſinned againſt, yet but *collaterally*, and as a ſtander-by, but as a circumſtance only, ſhot at *per accidens*, *concomitanter*, and by the by, as one that ſteps in to part a fray is ſmitten, for labouring to hinder them in their ſin, as the *Sodomites* quarrelled with *Lot*: they are both found in this Chapter, and therefore come fitly within the compaſſe of this diſcourſe.

2. What to ſin againſt knowledg *circumſtantially* only.

This diſtinction explained out of this Chapter.

Firſt, This *collaterall* kind of ſinning againſt knowledge is mentioned in the 21 Verſe, where he ſayes, *They knew God, yet they glorified him not*: there knowledge is made but a circumſtance of their ſinning; they ſinned againſt it but collaterally. But then that other kind of ſinning directly againſt knowledge, is mentioned ver. 28. *They liked not to retaine God in their knowledge*: that is, they hated this knowledge it ſelf, ſo as now they did not only love ſinne, they knew to be ſinne, but alſo they loved not the knowledge of it; ſo that becauſe both are thus clearly inſtanced in, we will ſpeak of both more largely.

Sins directly *againſt knowledg* reduced to two Heads.

Now ſinnes *directly againſt knowledge* it ſelfe are many: I will

will reduce the chief heads of them into two branches:

Firſt, In regard of our ſelves.

Secondly, In regard of others.

1. In regard of our ſelves five wayes.

Firſt, in regard of our ſelves, five wayes we may thus ſinne againſt knowledge it ſelfe.

1. When we abuſe knowledge to help us to ſin, three wayes.
1. To plot and contrive ſinne.
2. To colour ſins committed by lyes.
3. To colour ſins by pretence of religion, & uſe their knowledg of religion to plead for & juſtifie their ſinnes.

Firſt, when we abuſe knowledge to help us to ſinne: as firſt, to plot and contrive a ſinne, as *Judas* plotted to betray his Maſter, if he could *conveniently*; ſo the text ſayes, *Mark* 14.11. he would doe it wiſely: and thus thoſe that came to intrap Chriſt with moſt cunning *queſtions*, did ſin, and thoſe who plot againſt the juſt, as *Pſal.* 37.12.

So ſecondly, when men uſe their wiſdomes to tell a cunning lye, to cover a ſinne; as *Plato* ſayes, men of knowledge, *ſunt ad mendacia potentiores & ſapientiores*: whereas fooles, though they would lye, yet often tell truth ere they are aware.

But alſo thirdly, when they abuſe morall knowledge, which yet, as *Ariſtotle* ſayes, is leaſt apt to be (I am ſure ſhould leaſt be) abuſed, ſo as to make a ſhew of good pretences to cover their ſinnes, and diſſemble them; not only by finding out ſome cunning artificiall colour, as *David* did in the matter of *Uriah*---*chance of warre* (ſayes he) *falls to all alike*: but when men are ſo impudently hypocriticall, as to make uſe of religious pretexts, (as the Devill ſometimes doth) as *Saul*, who pretends to *Samuel*, *I have done the will of the Lord*: and when *Samuel* told him of the cattell, oh, ſayes he, *they are for a ſacrifice*; when God had expreſly commanded to kill them all. But this ſhift ſhifted him out of his Kingdome, *Samuel* pronounceth him a *rebell in it*, *Rebellion is ſinne againſt knowledge*, there he knew it. Thus alſo *Jezabel* coloured over the ſtoning of *Naboth* with a ſolemn faſt. So *Judas* fiſheth for mony with a charitable pretence, *This might have been ſold, and given to the poore*. In ſins againſt knowledge, uſually the mind endeavours to find out a colour, and that provokes God more than the ſin, becauſe we goe about to mock him. We ſee men cannot endure a ſhift, much leſſe the all-knowing God, not to be mocked: and we ſee it hard to convince ſuch an one. *David* was fain to be brought to the rack, ere he would confeſſe, when he had a ſhift; and men doe ſeek ſuch ſhifts only in caſe of ſinning againſt conſcience: for elſe there were

were no need, they would be sure to plead ignorance, as *Abimelech* did.

Secondly, when men neglect the getting and obtaining of *knowledge*, which knowledge might keep and hinder them from sinning, and might make them expert in duties. This is as much as to sinne against knowledge, although the sinnes be committed out of ignorance: yet that ignorance being through their owne default, it comes all to one: when it may be said of men, as the Apostle doth of the *Hebrewes*, *Chap.* 5. 12. *That for the time they have had to learne, they might have beene teachers; they had yet need be taught againe the first principles.* If a man had an Apprentice, who through negligence and want of heeding, and observing what he daily sees and heares about his trade, might have got for his time much knowledge in his trade, whereby he might have saved his master much, which he now hath lost him; and rid and perfected much work, he daily spoiles him; such careless blockish ignorance it is just for his master to correct him for, and to charge on him all that waste and losse, because he might have knowne how to have done better. And therefore even they who thought ignorance in it selfe no sinne (wherein they erred) yet the neglect of knowledge upon this very ground, they thought a great sinne, and that it would be so farre from excusing sinnes, as that it would aggravate them. So here we see these Gentiles shall not onely be reckoned with for the actuall knowledge they had attained to, and sinned against; but also for what they might have had and have picked out of the creatures. For so the Apostle brings in this here in the 20. verse, that the power of God being cleerly seen in the creatures, they neglecting to spell and read it, so much knowledge as they might have got, God will reckon to them, and aggravate their sins by.

2. When men neglect to get knowledge that might preserve them from sinning, &c.

Thirdly, which is yet much worse, when men refuse knowledge that they may sin the more freely; and so stop the eare, lest they should be charmed: As when men are loath, and afraid, and dare not read such a book as discovers, or might discover that truth to them, the submission to which would prejudice them, and this to the end that they may plead ignorance of their sinne. Thus also those that assent not to truth

3. When men refuse knowledge that they may sin more freely.

when it comes ſtrongly upon them, but ſeeke to evade it. But 1 *Cor.* 14. 38. when the Apoſtle had clearly diſcovered the truth in thoſe things controverted, ſo as *who ever was ſpirituall*, or not fully blind, might ſee, and would acknowledge the truth: then he ſhuts up his diſcourſe about them, *ver.* 27. *If any be ignorant, let him be ignorant*: for it is wilfull, *it is affected*; he ſpeaks it, as elſewhere, *Revel. ult.* it is ſaid, *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill*: that is, he that will be unjuſt, and refuſeth to turn, let him go on. This is a great ſinne, for God, you ſee, gives ſuch a man over: one that is but neglectfull, or dull of capacity, God will take paines with him, to teach him, and beare with him, as Chriſt did with his Diſciples: but if he be wilfully ignorant, he lets him die in his ignorance, and yet will reckon with him, as if all his ſinnes had been committed againſt knowledge, becauſe he refuſed to know.

4. Is to hate the light, & to endeavour to extinguiſh it.

The fourth is to hate the light, and to endeavour to extinguiſh it. This is yet much worſe, when men hate the Word, and the Miniſters of it, the examples of Gods people, and the light they carry with them (they *ſhining as lights in a crooked generation*, Phil. 2. 15. and yet they hate theſe, as theeves doe a torch in the night, and flie againſt the light, as batts doe, and as the *Jewes* did, *John* 3. 20.) This *Chriſt* ſayes is the *great condemning* ſinne of all others. So theſe Gentiles put *Socrates* to death for reproving them. And thus men ſinne alſo, when they labour to extinguiſh the light in their owne conſciences, and *like not to retaine God in their knowledge*, ver. 28. but would ſtudy the art of forgetfulneſſe: When men have put the candle out, and drawne the curtaines, that they may ſinne, and ſleep in ſinne more freely and ſecurely. Thus thoſe alſo ſinne in a higher meaſure, who have had a cleare conviction, that they ought to be thus ſtrict, and ought to ſanctifie the Lords day, and pray privately, but now have loſt this light, and thinke they need not be ſo ſtrict: when men *continue not* in what they *were once aſſured of*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Tim.* 3. 14. theſe ſinne againſt their knowledge, and are the worſt of ſuch ſinners: and this eſtate *Ariſtotle* himſelf makes *ſtatum maligni, the ſtate of a wicked one*, Namely, when the ſparks of light are extinguiſht or hated. For when any mans *light is* loſt and *turned into darkneſſe* by ſinning, then, as Chriſt ſayes, *how great*

is

is that darkneſſe? When good lawes are not onely not enacted and embraced, but repealed alſo, (it is *Ariſtotles* ſimilitude, to diſtinguiſh an incontinent perſon, and a wicked man) this is an high kinde of ſinning: So of theſe Gentiles it is ſaid, *their fooliſh heart was darkened*; they had extinguiſht ſome of that light God gave them. As ſome drinke away their wits, ſo ſome ſinne away their conſciences; and thus by degrees, they firſt ſinne away the light of the Word they had, as they in *Jude*, who were religious once, and then they quench even that little ſpark of nature that is left. Alſo verſe 10. *corrupting themſelves in what they know naturally.*

Fiftly, Men ſinne againſt knowledge yet worſe, when they hold opinion againſt their knowledge. So many are ſaid to doe, in 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. he foretels they ſhould ſpeak lies in *Hypocriſie*, and invent lies that ſhould have a pretence of Holineſſe; which they *know* to be a lye, or elſe they ſhould not be ſaid to ſpeak *lyes in hypocriſie*; but they doe it to maintaine their honour and greatneſſe, which muſt downe, if their doctrine prove falſe: and though many are given up *to beleeve* their lyes, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. as a puniſhment of their not *loving the truth*; yet others of them ſhall know they are lyes, and yet vent them for truths. Thus when men faſhion their opinion to the times and wayes of preferment, and their dependances on Great ones, or to maintaine and uphold a faſhion, or out of pride, having broached an errour, maintaine it, though the pulling out that one tile doth untile all the houſe. Theſe are the two cauſes given of perverting the truth, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. namely, *pride* and *covetouſneſſe*, and ſuppoſing *gaine godlineſſe*, and ſo faſhioning their religion accordingly: when men are *Knights* of the poſt, that will write or ſpeak any thing, whereby they may get gain and preferment.

5. Whē men hold opinions againſt their conſciences.

Secondly, men ſinne againſt knowledge in regard of others.

2. Men ſin *directly againſt knowledge* it ſelf in reſpect of *others*.

Firſt by concealing it: the Apoſtle indeed ſayes in a certaine caſe, *Haſt thou knowledge? keep it to thy ſelf.* He ſpeaks it of opinions or practices about things indifferent, which might ſcandalize the weake; but if thou haſt knowledge, which may edifie thy brother, thou oughteſt to communicate it. *Socrates*, knowing there was but one God, ſaid, in his Apologie for his life, that if they would give him life, upon condition to keep that truth to him-

1. By concealing knowledge.

himſelf, and not to teach it to others, he would not accept life upon ſuch a condition: and I remember he expreſſeth his reſolution in words very nigh the ſame words the *Apoſtles* uſed, *Acts* 4. 20. *whether it be better to obey God than men, judge you:* And, *We cannot but teach the things we have heard and ſeen,* ſayes Chriſt: for knowledge is a thing will boyle within a man for vent, and cannot be impriſoned: It is light, and the end why light was made, was to be ſet up to give light. And Chriſt argues from an apparent abſurdity to put a light under a buſhell, which may give light to all the houſe; Haſt thou knowledge of God and of his wayes, thou canſt not but ſpeake (if withall thou haſt but a good heart) to all in the family, to thy wife in thy boſome, &c. God tooke it for granted, that *Abraham* would teach his children what he ſhould know from him: The ſame diſpoſition is in all the children of *Abraham*.

2. Men endevour to ſuppreſſe knowledge in others.

Secondly, when men endeavour to ſuppreſſe knowledge. As the *Phariſees*, they *kept the keyes of it* in their hands, and would not open the treaſures of it themſelves, nor let others doe it neither. So they (Acts 4. 16.) *could not deny but a great miracle* was done by the Apoſtles (ſay themſelves) *but that it ſpread no further, let us threaten them, and charge them, that they ſpeake no more in his name.* And this they did againſt their conſciences, by their own profeſſion, *we cannot deny it*: as if they had ſaid, if we could we would, but it was too manifeſt it was the truth. So when Maſters keep their Servants from the meanes of knowledge, they are thus guilty.

3. When men goe about to make others ſinne againſt their conſciences. Joh. 9.

Thirdly, when we would make others ſinne againſt their conſciences. The *Phariſees*, when the blind man would not ſay as they ſaid, they caſt him out; they would have had him ſay that *Chriſt was a ſinner*, when through the ſmall light he had, he judged it evident enough, that a ſinner ſhould not doe ſuch a miracle, as was never done ſince the world began. And ſo *Jezabel* made the Judges and Witneſſes ſinne againſt conſcience, in accuſing *Naboth*: and ſo ſome of the Gentiles, that would hold correſpondency with the Jewes, would have conſtrained the *Galathians* to be circumciſed, *Gal.* 6. 12. Thoſe that knew that circumciſion was to be aboliſht, yet they would perſwade them to it by club-argument, drawne from avoiding perſecution, not from evidence

of

of the Truth, or by reaſons that might convince them, and their conſciences: therefore he ſayes, they *conſtrained them*. The perſwaders might indeed *glory*, as having their cauſe and ſide ſtrenthened, but they wanne little credit to their cauſe by it; for as the perſwaders arguments were ſuited to fleſh, ſo the others yeelding was out of fleſh, and *ſo they glory in your fleſh* and weakneſſe, ſayes he; as the Papiſts urged *Cranmer*, not by arguments, but threats and promiſes to recant; this is the greateſt cruelty in the world, to have a man murder himſelfe, ſtab his conſcience. To offend a weak conſcience is a ſinne, if but paſſively, when thou doſt ſomething before his face, which his conſcience is againſt: but if thou makeſt him wound his own conſcience, and to doe an act himſelfe, which his owne conſcience is againſt, it is much worſe: as if thou beeſt a Maſter, and haſt a ſervant who pleadeth *conſcience*, that he cannot lye for thy advantage in thy ſhop, or who will not doe unlawfull buſineſſe on the *Sabbath* day, and pleads conſcience, wilt thou ſmite him, and whip him? *God will ſmite thee, thou whited wall.* How dareſt thou ſmite him, and ſo cauſe him to doe that for which God will whip him worſer? Shew mercy to thoſe under you, enform their conſciences, wring them not, you may hap to break the wards if you doe.

2. Generall Branch: Sins committed collaterally or circumſtantially againſt knowledge. It is done, 1. either in particular acts of ſinning, or 2. In continuing in an eſtate of ſinning againſt knowledge. Particular inſtances being infinite. A Diſtinction is given concerning them. 1. Some ſinnes more tranſient.

Now for ſinnes committed *collaterally*, or *per modum circumſtantiæ*, (that I may ſo expreſſe it) againſt knowledge, they are done either when particular acts of ſin are committed, and duties omitted, againſt light and knowledge; and ſo the Saints may and do often ſin againſt knowledge. Or,

Secondly, in regard of a knowne eſtate of ſinne and impenitency perſiſted in; when men continue, and goe on in ſuch a ſtate againſt conviction of conſcience, that ſuch is their eſtates.

For the firſt, becauſe particular acts of ſinne committed againſt knowledge are infinite, and there will be no end of inſtancing in particulars, therefore I will not inſiſt: Onely in brief this diſtinction concerning ſuch acts may be obſerved, and the obſervation of it may be uſefull; That ſome *acts* of ſinnes *againſt knowledge*, are meerly *tranſient*: that is, are done and ended at once. And though the guilt of them is eternall, yet the

extent of the act is finiſhed with the committing it, and reached no further: as a vaine oath, breach of the Sabbath, &c. which acts cannot be repealed, though they may be repented of. But others there are, which though the act may be but once outwardly and profeſſedly done, yet have an habituall and continued permanency, life, and ſubſiſtence given it, ſuch as that untill a man doth recall them, he may he ſaid continually to renew thoſe acts, and every day to be guilty of them, and to maintaine it, and ſo habitually to commit them. As it is with Lawes, which though made but once, are yet continued acts of the State, whilſt they ſtand in force unrepealed: ſo is it in ſome ſinnes. For inſtance, when a man doth take goods from his neighbour unjuſtly, the act indeed is done but once: but till he reſtores them, he may be ſaid to ſteal them; every day, every hour, he continues to doe it habitually; So a man having ſubſcribed to falſhood, or recanted the truth publickly, the act, though done but once, yet untill a retraction be ſome wayes made, he continues that act, and ſo is daily anew guilty of it. So if a man ſhould marry one, whom it is unlawfull for him to marry, (as *Herod* did) though that ſinfull act of eſpouſals, whereby they entred into it, was ſoone diſpatcht; yet, till a divorce, he lives in a continuall ſinne. And ſuch acts (of this latter ſort I meane) againſt knowledge are moſt dangerous to commit; becauſe to continue thus in them, though but once committed, hazards a mans eſtate; and therefore men find, when they come to repent, the greateſt ſnare, and trouble, and difficulty in ſuch kind of ſins; to extricate themſelves out of them by a meet and true repentance.

2. Some more permanent and continued, untill recalled, though but once committed.

Which are of all other moſt dangerous to commit, when againſt knowledge.

But as concerning the firſt branch of this diſtinction, namely, of particular acts committed againſt knowledge; beſides this laſt diſtinction briefly touched; I wil anon give you ſeverall aggravations and rules, whereby to meaſure the ſinfulneſſe that is in ſuch acts ſo committed: but in the mean time, the ſecond branch of this former diſtinction muſt be inſiſted upon, and therefore I will bring in theſe aggravations and rules which concerne particular acts, as diſtinct Heads, after I have briefly ſpoken to this other which is, That

2. Going on in a ſinfull eſtate againſt knowledge.

Secondly, thoſe ſinne againſt knowledge, who goe on in an eſtate

eſtate of ſin and impenitency, which they know to be damnable: As *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 9. 27. who confeſt, that he and his people were wicked, and yet hardened himſelf in ſin moſt dangerouſly: and yet three ſorts of men may apparently be convinced thus to ſinne.

Three ſorts of men thus ſin.

1. Such as for worldly ends forbear to profeſſe Chriſt, & his ways, which they know to be ſuch.

Firſt, thoſe that keep out, and withdraw themſelves from profeſſing Chriſt and his wayes, and the fear of his name, out of ſhame or feare of man, or loſſe of preferment, or the like worldly ends, when yet they are convinced that they are Gods wayes, and ought to be profeſſed by them. I doe not ſay, that all, who doe not come in to profeſſe Chriſt, and that doe not joyne themſelves with his people, that they go on againſt knowledge; for many are ignorant, and miſtaken about them: but when men are convinced of the truth, and neceſſity of profeſſing and *confeſſing* of it even *unto ſalvation* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 10.) and yet out of fear, or ſhame, keep ſtill on the other ſide, drawing in their hornes all together. Theſe go on in an eſtate of impenitency againſt knowledge; for put all theſe together, and it muſt needs appear to be ſo: As firſt, when they are convinced that this is the truth, and that ſalvation and the power of religion is onely to be found in ſuch wayes and men: And ſecondly, that theſe are to be practiced and profeſſed, and yet thirdly, out of ſhame, &c. keep ſtill a looſe off, and goe on a contrary way; theſe muſt needes know, that they goe on in an eſtate of impenitency againſt knowledge. This was the caſe of many of the *Phariſees*, who therefore ſinned highly: they beleeved, and were convinced, that Chriſt was the Meſſiah; and ſo then to be confeſt, and followed, and to be cleaved unto: and then alſo they muſt needs know, that his followers onely were the *Children* of God: Yet *Joh* 12. 42. it is ſaid, *though they* thus *beleeved on him*, yet they *durſt not confeſſe him for fear of the Jewes*, and of the *Phariſees*, and of being *put out of the Synagogues*. At the latter day, Chriſt ſhall not need to ſever ſuch from the reſt as he will doe the ſheep from the goats; for they willingly remain all their dayes amongſt them, whom they know to be goats, and refuſe the company, and fould, and food, and markes of the ſheep, which they know to be ſuch: they may apologize, and make faire with the Saints, that their

hearts are with them, but they will be rankt at the day of Judgment, as here they ranked themſelves, *With the Workers of iniquity.* Of theſe doth the Pſalmiſt ſpeak, *Thoſe that turne aſide by their crooked wayes, them ſhall the Lord leave with the workers of iniquity.*

Pſal. 125. ult.

Thoſe alſo thus ſinne, and are to be joyned with theſe, who know the tearms and condition of ſalvation, and how they muſt part with all for Chriſt, and yet will not come to the price, ſuch doe goe deſperately on againſt knowledge in a bad eſtate, and do judge themſelves unworthy of eternall life. Thus the young man in the Goſpel, he was told, that he was to ſell all, and that was the condition, and he knew heaven was worth it, and was convinced of the truth herein, that thus he ought to doe, *for he went away ſorrowfull:* now if he had not knowne that he went away without happineſſe, he needed not have been ſorrowfull at all; but he knew the bargain of ſalvation was not ſtruck up, and likewiſe what it ſtruck at, and yet ſtill reſted in his former condition, and choſe rather to enjoy his many poſſeſſions: This man now went on in his ſtate againſt knowledge.

2. Thoſe that defer repentance.

Secondly, as alſo thoſe who upon the ſame or like ground defer their repentance, theſe goe on in a bad eſtate, and muſt needes know they doe ſo; for in that they promiſe to repent hereafter, and take up purpoſes to doe it, when they have gone on a little while longer, to adde drunkenneſſe to thirſt, they doe thereby profeſſe that there is a work of grace, which they muſt attaine to, ere they can be in the ſtate of grace: for they would not promiſe ſo much hereafter, but that they know not how, without ſuch a work, they ſhould be ſaved. Whilſt therefore ſuch ſhall reſt without preſent endeavouring after it, ſo long they are judged in themſelves to be in a bad eſtate at preſent. When men know the curſes due to their preſent eſtate, and yet ſay as he, *Deut. 29. 19. I will go on in the way of my heart, and ſhall have peace* afterward. This man ſins moſt highly, and therefore Gods wrath *ſmoakes againſt that man*, and he ſayes of him, that *he will not be mercifull to him*, in that place.

3. Apoſtate profeſſors goe on in an eſtate of ſinning againſt knowledge.

Thirdly, ſurk and broken profeſſors, ſuch cannot but go on in a bad eſtate againſt knowledge, when either men are falne from the practice and profeſſion of what is good, which once they thought neceſſary to ſalvation; or when they continue to hold forth

forth their profeſſion in *Hypocriſie*. *Thoſe that have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, but but are returned to their vomit againe, ſome of theſe are ingenious, and acknowledge both themſelves falne, and their preſent eſtate moſt miſerable, and yet goe on in it; and ſuch are to be pitied, but yet are in a moſt dangerous condition. *Saul* when he was falne away, yet had this ingenuity a while left, he deſired *Samuel* to pray to his God for him, and told *David*, that he was more righteous than he; yet ſtill went on in his courſes, and in the end (as ſome have thought) ſinned againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*.

But others there are, who though they be falne from all the inward, powerfull and ſecret performance of duties they once did practice, and from all conſcience of ſinning, yet retaine their profeſſion which they know to be but an out-ſide; theſe of all others go on againſt knowledge; and *Rev.* 22.15. they are ſaid *to make a lye*; not onely to *tell a lye* in words, but to *make a lye* in deeds. Now a lye is a ſinne of all others moſt againſt *knowledge*, and indeed againſt a *double knowledge*, both *facti* and *juris*: and ſo is this. 1. That they profeſſe themſelves to be that they *know* they are not. 2. That they will not endeavour after that ſtate they *know* they ought to get into, if ever ſaved. This is the condition of many, who being convinced of the power of religion, have launched forth into a profeſſion, and hoyſt up ſaile, but now the tyde is falne, the ſpirit withdrawne, the conſcience of ſinne extinguiſht in them; yet for their credit ſake ſtill beare their ſailes up as high as ever: even as many Merchants doe, who are *ſunk* in their eſtates, ſtill beare a faire ſhew, yea will ſeeme richer than ordinary, by purchaſing lands, &c. Such a Profeſſor was *Judas*, he began ſeriouſly, and thought to have gone to heaven, and was earneſt in good duties at firſt: as they alſo, 2 *Pet.* 2. 18. they *really*, or ὄντως, eſcaped the *pollutions* of the world, *through the knowledge of* CHRIST, but in the end *Judas* became a *groſſe Hypocrite*, one that pretended the poore, when he loved the bagge; and on the ſudden betrayed his Maſter, when yet the Diſciples knew it not, ſuſpected *Judas* as little as themſelves; and *the end* of thoſe alſo, in that fore-named place, it is ſaid to be *worſe than their beginning*. Now becauſe ſuch ſinne ſo highly againſt knowledge, therefore their puniſhment is made the

regula, of all other wicked mens; as when it is ſaid, *that other ſinners ſhall have their portion with Hypocrites*: as the wicked Angels puniſhment is made the meaſure of mens: *Goe ye curſed into the fire prepared for the Devill and his Angels*: ſo among men, ſuch groſſe Hypoctites, their puniſhment is made the rule, and ſo the chief of all kind of torments, which ſinners of the ſons of men ſhall undergoe.

Application. Now let me ſpeak a word to all ſuch as thus go on in a ſtate of impenitency againſt knowledge: this is a high kind of ſinning, and of all the moſt deſperate, and doth argue more hardneſs of heart, and *deſpiſing the riches of Gods goodneſſe*. For if, as in the *Rom.* 2. 4. to goe on in ſinne, when a man [*knowes not*] that is, conſiders not that *Gods mercy leads him to repentance, is made the ſigne and effect of a very hard heart, treaſuring up wrath*, then much more, when thou knoweſt and conſidereſt thou art in an impenitent condition, and haſt many motions leading thee to repentance, is thy heart then to be accounted hard? When a man commits a particular act againſt knowledge, he haply and uſually ſtill thinks his eſtate may be good, and that he ſhall not loſe God utterly, or hazard the loſſe of him; onely his ſpirit, being at preſent empty of communion with him, he ſteales out to ſome ſtolne pleaſure: but when a man knowes his eſtate bad, and that he is *without God in the world*, and yet goes on, he doth hereby caſt away the *Lord*, and profeſſeth he cares not for him, or that communion which is to be had by him, as *Eſau* did his birthright.

David, though he deſpiſed the Lord, yet he did not caſt away the Lord, as *Saul* did: for *Saul* ventured utterly to loſe him, knowing his eſtate naught.

David, when he ſinned, thought Gods eternall favour would ſtill continue, though for the preſent he might loſe the ſenſe of it.

But when a man goes on in a ſtate of ſinning, he ventures the loſſe of Gods eternall love, and ſlights it, and knowes he doth ſo: when a man knowes that he is *condemned already*, as being impenitent, and that all his eternall eſtate lyes upon the non-payment of ſuch duties of repentance, &c. and that the guilt of all his ſins will come in upon him, and that an execution is out, and

and yet goes on, this is more than to commit one act against knowledge, whereby he thinks he brings upon himselfe but the guilt of that one sinne; and upon the committing of which, he thinks not the morgage of all lyes, though it deserves it; herein men shew themselves more desperate.

In the next place, I come to those *rules, whereby you may measure and estimate sinning against knowledge.* in any particular act of sinning; and they are either *before the sinne*, or *in sinning: three* of either, which I make a second head, to explaine this doctrine by.

2. Head: *Rules* whereby to estimate sins against knowledge. Of two sorts: *Before* sinning. 1. Before sinning, 3. rules.

First, *before.*

The first rule is, The more thou knewest, and didst consider the issues and consequents of that sinne thou didst commit, the more thou sinnest against conscience in it: when as in *Rom.* 1. ult. *Thou knowing* (sayes the *Apostle*) *that those that commit such things, are worthy of death:* that is, thou considerest that *Hell* and *Damnation* is the issue and desert of it, and *yet committest it*; yea and this when haply hell fire at present flasheth in thy face, and yet thou goest on to doe it, in this case men are said *to choose death*, and *to love it, Prov.* 3. 36. When a man considers, *that the way* to the whore-house *are the ways to death* (as *Solomon* speaks) So when thou a Professor considerest with thy selfe before, This sin will prove scandalous, and undoe me, disable me for service, cast me out of the hearts of good men, and yet dost it. Thus that foolish King was told again and again, *Jer.* 38. 17, 18, 19. that if he would yeild to the *King of Babel*, he should save his life, and City, and Kingdome, and live there still; but if he would not, he should not escape: but as *Jeremy* told him. *v.* 23. *Thou shalt cause this City to be burnt with fire*, yet he would not hearken: *This is the Word of the Lord* (sayes *Jeremy*) and he knew it to be so; and yet being a weake Prince led by his Nobles, he would not follow his Counsel: and thus *Judas* fully knew the issue; Christ had said againe and againe, *Woe be to him by whom the Sonne of man is betrayed*, and yet went on to doe it.

1. Rule, The more a man considers the issues and consequents of a sinne.

2. Rule, The more consultations and debates before.

The second rule is, the more consultations, debates, and motives against it, did run through thee before thou didst it, so much the greater and more hainous. How often did mercy come in, and tell thee, that if thou lookest for any hope or part in it, thou shouldest

shouldest not doe such an evil? how often came that in, *Shall I do this, and sin against God?* did any Scripture come in to testifie against thee in the nick; did God send in the remembrance of such a mercy past, to perswade thee; or some mercies to come, which thou dependest upon him for? That which made *Spira's* sinne so great, was such debates as these before: and this made *Darius* sin, in casting *Daniel* into the Lyons den, so great he debated it with himselfe, *Dan.6.14.* he was sore displeased with himselfe, and labour'd to the going down of the sun to deliver him; he consider'd that he was as his right hand in all the affaires of his Kingdome, and a man entrapped meerly for his conscience, and that to put him to death was to sacrifice him to their malice; he knew him to be holy, and wise, worth all the men that sought after his life, had yet yeilded; these considerations troubled him afore, and also after; insomuch as he could not sleep for them, *v.18.* Now because that every such consultation should set an impression upon the heart, and countermand the motions of sin, when therefore thou dost it, maugre all such debates & motives to the contrary, this is much *against knowledge*, and very heynous. Therfore the *Pharisees*, *Luk.17.30.* are said *to have rejected the counsel of God*, εἰς ἑαυτὸς, *in* or *against themselves*: the words will bear either: *In themselves*, because they knew it, and tooke it into consideration, and yet rejected it: and *against themselves*, because it was their destruction.

3. Rule, The more testimonies & warnings against a sinne.

The third rule is, that the more confirmations any man hath had of the knowledge of that which he sinneth in, & testimonies against it, the greater sinne against knowledge it is: when a man hath had a cloud of witnesses in his observation against a particular sinne, and yet doth it, and goes on in it, it is the more fearefull. To goe on against that one witnesse, the bare light and grudging of naturall conscience onely, is not so much; but when it is further confirmed, and backed by the word written, which a man hath read, and with testimonies, out of which a man meets with such places, wherein againe and againe in reading of it, such a practice is condemned, and observes it; and then also heares it reproved in Sermons, and of all sinnes else, heares in private conference that sinne spoken against also; yea hath in his eye many examples of others sinning in the like kinde, which have been punished, yea haply himselfe also; yet to sinne against all these is exceeding

exceeding hainous. Sometimes God orders things ſo, as a ſinne is made a great ſinne, by ſuch forewarnings, ſo he contrived circumſtances that *Judas* ſinned a great ſinne; for *Judas* knew before that *Chriſt* was the Saviour of the world; he knew it by all the miracles he had ſeene, as alſo by his gracious words and converſe; and he profeſſed as much in following of him; and he had the written word againſt it, *Thou ſhalt not murder the innocent.* But yet further, God to aggravate his ſinne to the higheſt, orders it ſo, that *Chriſt* ſhould tell him of it when he was to goe about it, pronounceth a woe to him, *John* 22. 22. that *it had been good for that man that he had never been born*, *Mar.* 14. 21. and the Diſciples they were ſorrowfull at *Chriſts* ſpeech, when he ſuſpected one of them; and ſhewed an abomination and deteſtation of ſuch a fact, there was a Jury of eleven men, yea witneſſes againſt it; yea and *Judas* againſt himſelf, he asked *if it* were *he*; yea and *Chriſt* gave him a ſop, and told him, *thou haſt ſaid it*, and *doe what thou doſt quickly*: which even then might argue to his conſcience, that he was God, and ſearched and knew his heart, and yet he went out and did it immediately. How did he ſinne againſt the hair, as we ſpeak, and how did all theſe circumſtances aggravate his ſin?

But yet a more clear evidence of this is that inſtance of *Pilate*, whom God many wayes would have ſtopt in his ſinne of condemning *Chriſt*, who examining him before the *Phariſees*, he could finde no fault with him, as concerning thoſe things whereof they accuſed him, *Luke* 23. 14. and yet to allay their malice, unjuſtly ſcourged him, *Verſe* 16. And further, when he ſent him to *Herod*, as being willing to ridde his hands of him, *Herod* alſo found nothing worthy of death in him, *Verſe* 15. which was another witneſſe might have confirmed him concerning Chriſts innocency. Yea yet further, that the fact might be more aggravated, a moſt notorious murtherers life muſt be put into the ſcale with *Chriſts*, and either the one or the other condemned: and when the people yet choſe *Barabbas*, why (ſayes *Pilate*) what evill hath he done? *Verſe* 22. then he diſtinctly knew and conſidered, that he was delivered up through envy: Yea and when he was upon the bench, and ready to pronounce ſentence, as it were, God admoniſht him by his own wife, (*Mat.* 27. 19.

whom God himſelfe had admoniſhed in a dreame, ſhe ſending him word ſhe had ſuffered *many things by reaſon of him that night, and therefore have nothing* (ſayes ſhe) *to doe with that juſt man:* yea he himſelfe, when he condemnes him, waſheth his hands. And thus it falls out in many ſinfull buſineſſes which men are about, that God often and many ſeverall wayes would knock them off, and ſtops them in their way, as he did *Balaam*; reproves them, as he did him by a dumb Aſſe, 2 *Pet.* 2. 16. ſo there by ſome ſilent paſſage of providence, and not onely ſo, but by his Spirit alſo ſtanding in their way, with the threatnings ready drawn and brandiſht againſt them, as the *Angell* did with a drawn ſword againſt *Balaam*, and yet they goe on; this is fearfull.

Two Rules to meaſure the ſinfulneſſe of ſuch acts. *In* ſinning, 3.

There are 3. Rules alſo, whereby the ſinfullneſſe of ſin, as it is againſt knowledg, may be meaſured, from what may be obſerved IN the act: as,

1. The leſſe paſſion or temptation to a ſinne againſt knowledge.

Firſt, the leſſe paſſion, or inward violence or temptation to a ſinne committed againſt knowledge, the greateſt ſinne againſt knowledge it is argued to be: For then the knowledge is the clearer, paſſion or temptation being as a miſt. But then to ſinne, when a man is not in paſſion, is to ſtumble at noon-day. For as drunkenneſſe takes away reaſon, ſo doth paſſion (which is a ſhort drunkenneſſe) cloud and miſt a mans knowledg. And ſo *Ariſtotle* compares the knowledge of an *incontinent* perſon, to the knowledge of one that is drunk. When *Peter* denyed his Maſter, though he had warning of it before, and ſo it was againſt knowledg, and it was by lying, and ſwearing, and forſwearing, which are ſinnes of all other moſt directly againſt knowledge, yet he was taken unexpectedly; and when that which might ſtir up fear to the utmoſt in him, was in his view; for he was then in the Judgement Hall, where his Maſter, juſt before his face, was arraigned for his life; and he thought he might alſo have preſently beene brought to the barre with him, if he had been diſcovered to have been his Diſciple; ſo as his paſſion being up, his ſoul was diſtempered, reaſon had little time to recover it ſelf; and therefore though it was againſt knowledge, yet the leſſe againſt knowledge, becauſe knowledge had *læſam operationem*, it had not its perfect work upon his heart: but now *Judas*, in betraying his Maſter,

Maſter, had not only warning before, but was not tempted to it, but went of *himſelf*, and made the offer to the *Phariſees*, ſought how *conveniently* to do it, plotted to do it, had his wits about him, had time to think of it, and therefore it was (beſides the hainouſneſſe of the act) more alſo againſt knowledg, and ſo the greater. So *David* when he went to ſlay *Nabal*, was in hot blood, in a paſſion; but when he plotted to kill *Uriah*, he was in cold blood: he was drunk when he lay with *Bathſheba*, but ſober when he made *Uriah* drunk: he went quietly and ſedately on in it. And there we find *David* blamed only in the matter of *Uriah*, not ſo much for that of *Bathſheba*.

Secondly, the more ſorrow, *reniſus*, or reluctancy, and regreeting of minde there is againſt a ſinne, it is a ſigne that the knowledge of it is the ſtronger, and quicker againſt it, and ſo the ſinne the more againſt knowledge: for that gain-ſaying and diſpleaſure of the mind againſt it, ariſeth from the ſtrength and violent beating of the pulſe of *conſcience*, and oppoſition of it againſt the ſinne, it ſprings from the greater and deeper apprehenſion of the evill of the ſinne in the action, which is then in doing: and though that reluctancy be a better ſigne of the eſtate of the perſon, than if there were none at all; as there is not in thoſe who *are paſt feeling, and commit ſinne with greedineſſe*; whoſe eſtate is therefore worſe, and more uncapable of repentance, yet the fact it ſelf is argued to be the more hainous, for it argues it to be againſt ſtrong, active, ſtirring knowledge. This argued *Herods* ſin to be much againſt knowledge (as indeed it was) *Mar.* 9. 26. the Text ſayes, *he was exceeding ſorrowfull*: now that he could not have been, unleſſe he had exceedingly apprehended what a great ſinne it was to behead *John*, who, *he knew, was a juſt and an holy man, ver.* 20. and who was one that had a great place in his eſtimation, *for he obſerved him*, and was wrought much upon by his miniſtery, and he knew that he did but ſacrifice him to the malice of a wicked woman; and in this caſe the ſinne is alſo hereby made ſo much the greater, in that *Conſcience* doth ſtir up a contrary violent paſſion in the heart againſt the temptation, and therefore yet to doe it, when there is ſuch a bank caſt up that might reſiſt it, yet then to break all down, ſuch a ſin waſts the conſcience much.

The more inward regreet, & ſorrow, and reluctancy, the ſtronger is the knowledge, and ſo more againſt it.

3. The more hardneſſe of heart in committing a ſinne known to be a ſin, the greater the ſin, as it is a ſinne againſt knowledge.

Thirdly, on the contrary, the more hardneſſe of heart there is, and want of tenderneſſe, in committing that ſinne, which a man knowes to be a ſinne, it is argued thereby to be the greater ſinne againſt knowledge; not onely *the greater ſinne*, but *the greater ſinne againſt knowledge*. For hardneſſe of heart in ſinning is an effect of having formerly ſinned much againſt knowledge before. For as the light of the Sunne hardneth clay, ſo the beames of knowledge and conſcience, lightning upon mens hearts, uſe to harden them, and doe make them in the end *paſt feeling*. And therefore in 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. ſinning againſt knowledge is made the cauſe of a ſeared conſcience, *they ſpeake lyes in Hypocriſie*: and therefore knowingly that they are lyes, and ſuch lyes as damne others as well as themſelves, which who beleeve are damned, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11, 12. and if ſo, no wonder if it followes, *having their Conſciences ſeared with an hot Iron*. It is not a *cold iron* will ſear their conſciences, and make them inſenſible, but a *hot iron*, *a burning and a ſhining light*, which once having had place in their conſciences, and being rejected, they begin to be hardned and ſeared. For knowledge makes ſinnes and the apprehenſion of them, familiar to a man, and ſo leſſe terrible and frightfull in the end, as Bears and Lyons doe become to their keepers, through cuſtome. *Judas* had a hard heart, when he came to betray his Maſter, ſurely his conſcience had ſmitten him at firſt more for nimming out of the bag, than it did now for this of murder. He could never have had ſuch a hard heart, had he not had much kowledge: was it not a heart, that when he was challenged to his face, he could ſet a brazen face on it, and did ask as well as the reſt, *Is it I?* when alſo Chriſt curſed him to his face, who ſhould doe it, and the Diſciples all abhorred it: had not *Judas* lived under ſuch bleſſed and glorious meanes, and ſinned long againſt knowledge, all this would have ſtartled him, and have ſtaggered in his purpoſe: but he goes on as if it were nothing though when he had done it, his conſcience was then opened too late; when a man formerly hath been troubled with a ſmall ſin, more than now with a groſſe lye, which he can digeſt better than once the other: or, when before, if he omitted praying, it troubled him now he can go a week without, and is not ſenſible of it, it is a ſigne that his knowledge hath hardened him.

Thus

Thus having given ſuch rules, whereby you may eſtimate the ſinfulneſſe of particular acts, I will now proceed to other waies, aggravations taken from the kinde of knowledge a man ſinnes againſt, to ſinne againſt what kinde of knowledge is moſt heynous and dangerous; and theſe are *five*, drawn from the ſeverall qualifications of that knowledge, and the light which men ſinne againſt. For the greater, or the more ſtrong and efficacious the light and knowledge is, the greater is the ſinne of knowledge thou committeſt; and this I make a *third* generall head to explaine this doctrine by. All theſe five rules being applicable and common both to particular acts againſt knowledge, and alſo lying in an eſtate of impenitency againſt knowledge, and all other particulars which have been mentioned.

3. Head. Aggravations drawne from the *kind* of that knowledge we ſinne againſt, which are five. The more ſtrong the knowledge, the greater the ſinne.

Firſt then, to ſinne againſt the inbred light of nature, that is, in ſuch ſinnes, as though thou hadſt wanted the light of the word in, thou wouldſt have knowne to be ſuch: This is a high kinde of ſinning. Such the Apoſtle ſpeakes of, *Jude* 10. *What things they know naturally, in theſe they corrupt themſelves, as bruit beaſts*, putting as it were no difference of actions, no more than beaſts, no not in what nature teacheth them, and therefore therein are as beaſts: for it is the light of nature puts the firſt difference betweene men and beaſts; and in ſuch kinde of ſinnes the *Apoſtle* inſtanceth in this firſt Chapter, as namely, that of *unnaturall uncleanneſſe*, in three particulars: as 1. *ſelf uncleanneſſe*, *ver.* 24. ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, that is, alone *by themſelves*: ſo *Beza* and *Theophilact* underſtand it, which he makes there the firſt degree of unnaturall uncleanneſſe, which is therefore unnaturall becauſe thou deſtroyeſt that which nature gave thee for propagation, *quod perdis homo eſt*. Then 2. the uncleane love of boyes, *men burning in luſt with men*, *verſe* 27. be it diſcovered in what dalliance it will, though not ariſing to an act of Sodomie, *doing that which is unſeemly*, *verſe* 27. which he therefore ſayes, is the *perverting the uſe* and intent *of nature*, and ſo is a ſinne againſt nature, *leaving the naturall uſe of women*. *My brethren, I am aſhamed to ſpeake of ſuch things as are done in ſecret*. Theſe kind of ſinnes, by the Apoſtles ranking them, are in a further degree of unnaturalneſſe, than any other, becauſe they are made the puniſhments of other ſinnes, which yet were againſt the

1. To ſin againſt the inbred light of nature.

light of nature also: namely, not *glorifying God* when they knew him: yet that being a sinne, the light of nature was not so cleare in comparison of these, therefore these are made the punishments of the other, as being more against nature. So for men to be disobedient to Parents, stubborne to them, and *without naturall affection*, as the Apostle sayes, *ver.* 30, 31. this is against nature, even the instinct of it. So unthankfulnesse, and requiting evil for good, is against a common principle in mens minds. *Doe not the Gentiles doe good to those that doe good to them?* your hearts use to rise against such an one out of common humanity; or if you see one cruell and unmercifull, which is another reckoned up, *v.*31. there being usually principles of pity in all mens natures, by nature; therefore for one man to prey upon, and tyrannize over another, as fishes doe over the small ones, as *Habakuk* complaineth, this is against nature; which teacheth *you to doe as you would be done to.* So *covenant-breakers*, and lying, and forswearing, mentioned *ver.*30. *inventers of evill*, and *truce-breakers*, are sinnes against nature, and naturall light; lying is against a double light, both morall; both *juris*, which tels us such a thing ought not to be done; and *facti*, whilst we affirme a thing that is not, the knowledge of the contrary ariseth up in us against it, though there were no law forbade it; therefore of all sinnes else, the Devils lusts are expressed by two; *lying*, which is a sinne in the understanding, and *malice* in the will, *John* 8. 44.

Hab. 1. 14.

2. To sin against the light of education.

Secondly, to sinne against that light which thou didst suck in, when thou wert young, to sinne against the *light of thy education*, this is an aggravation, and a great one. There is a *Catechisme* of a blessed Mother *Bathsheba*, which she taught *Solomon* when a child, put in among the records of sacred Writ, *Prov.*31. wherein she counsels him betimes, *not to give his strength to Women*; she fore-told him of that sinne: and because it is incident to Kings most, they having all pleasures at command, she tells him particularly, *it destroyes Kings*: and so also *not to drinke wine*, was another instruction there he was forewarned of: this aggravated *Solomon's* fault the more; for, read the second Chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, and we shall find there, that he was most guilty in the inordinate love of these two; but he had not beene brought up so, his good Mother had not thus instructed him.

And

And thus alſo when God would aggravate his owne peoples ſin unto them, he recalls them to their education in their youth in the wilderneſſe. So *Jer.* 2.2. *Goe and crie to them, I remember the kindneſſe and* towardlineſſe *of thy youth:* he puts them in minde of their education by *Moſes* their *Tutour*, and their forwardneſſe then. And ſo *Hoſ.* 12. *when he Was a child, I loved him*; and then God had *their firſt fruits, verſe* 3. this he brings to aggravate their *back-ſliding, verſe* 5. Therefore the Apoſtle urgeth it as a ſtrong argument to *Timothy*, to goe on to perſevere in grace and goodneſſe, *That he had knowne the Scriptures from a child:* and therefore for him to fall, would be more heynous. The reaſon is, becauſe the light then infuſed, it is the firſt, a *virgin* light, as I may call it, which God in much mercy vouchſafed to prepoſſeſſe the minde with, before it ſhould be deflowred and defiled with corrupt principles from the world; and did put it there to keep the minde chaſte and pure: and this alſo then, when the mind was moſt ſoft and tender, and ſo fitter to receive the deeper impreſſion from it. And hence ordinarily the light ſuckt in then, ſeaſons men ever after, whether it be for good, or for evill; it fore-ſtalls, and prejudgeth a man againſt other principles; and though a man comes to have more acquired knowledge and reaſons after put into him when he is come to perfect age, yet the ſmall light of his education, if it were to the contrary, doth bias him, and keeps him fixt, and bent that way. So we ſee it is in opinions about Religion: the light then entertained, can never be diſputed out: ſo in mens wayes and actions, *Train up a child in his Way, and he Will not depart from it, Prov.* 22.6. To ſinne therefore againſt it, and to put out the beames of it, or defile it, and to weare out the impreſſions of it, how wicked is it, and what a wretch art thou to doe ſo?

Many of you young Scholars have had a good *Bathſheba* that inſtructed you, not to poure out your ſtrength to Drinke or Women, but to pray privately, and to feare God, and love him; and when you come hither, you have good *Tutours* alſo, who teach you to pray; Miniſters, who inſtill bleſſed truths into you, from which, one would thinke, you ſhould never depart; yet you doe.

Thinke how grievous this is; for if it is made an excuſe for many

many a man in ſinning, that it anſwers his education; that he never knew or ſaw better, as you ſay of many Papiſts, then muſt it needs on the contrary, be an aggravation of ſinfulneſſe. And as it was *Timothies* commendation, *That he knew the Scriptures from a child*, ſo it will be thy condemation, that thou kneweſt better from a child, and yet rebelleſt againſt thy light.

3. The more reall & experimentall light men ſin againſt.

Thirdly, the more *reall* and *experimentall* the light is, men ſinne againſt, ſtill the more ſinne; as when they have learnt it from examples of godly men, whom they have lived amongſt, or the obſervations of Gods dealings with themſelves or others, and not onely from the word notionally. To ſinne againſt ſuch light, this addes a further degree; not onely to ſinne againſt the bare light of nature, but alſo further, when nature hath beſides lighted her torch at the *Scripture*, and then when beyond all this, the reall examples and obſervations made of Gods dealings with a mans ſelfe and others, ſhall confirme all this, this makes a mans ſinfulneſſe much more grievous; for as *exempla efficacius docent quam præcepta*, ſo the knowledge got by experiments of mercies or judgments, is of more force and evidence. Knowledge learnt by experience, is the moſt efficacious. Therefore Chriſt himſelfe, who knew all things already, yet *learnt* (in the ſchoole of experience) *by what he ſuffered*. A little of ſome knowledge diſtilled out of a mans owne obſervation, is moſt precious, every drop of it; therefore the Apoſtle urgeth it on *Timothie*, 2 Tim. 3. 14. *Continue in the things thou haſt learned, and been aſſured of, knowing of whom thou haſt learned them.* There is a two-fold motive, and both emphaticall; Firſt, he was *aſſured* in himſelfe; and ſecondly, that which ſtrengthned that aſſurance, and was a meanes to worke it, was the example of the holy Apoſtle, and of his owne Parents, *Knowing of whom thou haſt learned it*: And ſo *verſe* 10. the Apoſtle againe urgeth his owne example, *Thou haſt fully knowne my doctrine and manner of life*; and then alſo brings to his minde the education of thoſe his godly Parents, who inſtructed him. Hence alſo, *Eſay* 26. 10. it is made an aggravation, that *in the land of uprightneſſe men deale unjuſtly*. Thus light drawne from the obſervation of Gods judgements upon others, it much aggravates: it is laid to *Belſhazzars* charge, Dan. 5. 22. *Thou kneweſt all this, how God dealt*

dealt with thy father Nebuchadonozer. So ſome of you come here, and live in a religious ſociety, and ſee ſometimes one, ſometimes another of thy Coleagues turn to Chriſt, yea haply chamber-fellow converted from his evill courſes, and yet thou goeſt on, this is ſinning againſt a great light.

Fourthly, the more vigorous, ſtrong, powerfull the light is that is in thee, and more *ſtirring* in thy heart, and joyned with a taſte, the greater the ſinnes committed againſt it are to be accounted. The more thou haſt taſted the bitterneſſe of ſinne, and Gods wrath, and haſt been ſtung with it as with a *Cockatrice*, the more thou haſt taſted Gods goodneſſe in prayer, and in the ordinances, the more of ſuch a knowledge, and yet ſinneſt the worſe. In the 5. of *John*, 35. *Chriſts* aggravates the *Jewes* unbeliefe in himſelfe, and their preſent hardneſſe, that *John* was to them, not only a *ſhining*, but alſo a *burning light*; that is, they had ſuch knowledge engendred by his miniſtery, as wrought joy and heat, as well as light; therefore it is added, *they rejoyced therein for a ſeaſon.* And thus their fall, *Heb.* 6. is aggravated, that it was ſuch a light as had taſting with it. For to explaine this, you muſt know, that between *ordinary nationall light*, or that aſſenting to ſpirituall truths which is common with men, from traditionall knowledge living in the Church, that between it and true ſaving light, or *the light of life*, there is a middle kind of light, which is more than the common conviction men have, and leſſe than having light: it is a light which leaves alſo ſome impreſſion on the affections, makes them feel the *powers of heaven and hell*, and be affected with them. Now the more of ſuch light againſt a ſinne, be it drunkenneſſe, or uncleanneſſe, or oppreſſion, and yet falleſt to it againe, the worſe. For this is a further degree added to knowledge, and not common to all wicked men. And therefore as thoſe *Jewes*, who had not onely common meanes of knowledge, but *miracles* alſo, and yet *believed not*, *John* 12. 17. ſhall be more condemned; ſo thoſe who have ſuch taſting knowledge ſet on by the Holy Ghoſt (which is as much as if a miracle were wrought, for it is above nature, a *ſupernaturall* work of the *Spirit*.) And therefore to ſin againſt ſuch light, and ſuch only, is that which makes a man in the next degree of fitneſſe to ſin againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*.

4. The more ſhining the light is in the conſcience joyned with a taſte, the greater the ſin.

5. To ſinne againſt profeſſed knowledge.

Fiftly, to ſinne againſt profeſſed knowledge, is an aggravation alſo, and an heavy one. To ſin againſt a mans own principles which he teacheth others, or reproves or cenſureth in others. *Titus* 1. laſt, *Thoſe that profeſſe they know God, and yet deny him*, theſe are moſt *abominable* of all others: For theſe are lyars, and ſo ſinne againſt knowledge as lyars do, in the 1 *John* 2. 4. ſuch an one is called a *lyar* in a double reſpect, both in that he ſayes he hath that knowledge he hath not, it not being true; and becauſe alſo he denies that in deed, which he affirmes in word, this is ſcandalous ſinning. So *Rom.* 2. 24. the *Jewes boaſting of the law*, and of *having the forme of knowledge* in their braines, cauſed the *Gentiles to blaſpheme*, when they ſaw they lived clean contrary thereunto: and therefore a brother that walkes inordinately, was to be delivered to *Satan, to learn what it was to blaſpheme*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 20. That is, to learn to know how evill and bitter a thing it is, by the torments of an evill conſcience, to live in ſuch a courſe, as made God and his wayes evill ſpoken of, as it befell *David* when he thus ſinned, Yea, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10, 11. though they might keep company with a heathen, becauſe he was ignorant, & profeſſed not the knowledge of God; *yet if a brother*, one that profeſſed, and ſo was to walk by the ſame rules, did ſin againſt thoſe principles he profeſſed, then *keep him not company*: Thus did *Saul* ſinne. All the Religion he had and pretended to in his latter dayes, was *perſecuting Witches*: yet in the end he went againſt this his principle; he went to a Witch in his great extremity at laſt. And thus God will deal with all that are hollow, and ſin ſecretly againſt knowledge in the end. He ſuffers them to go on againſt their moſt profeſſed principles.

Theſe are aggravations in generall, applicable both to any act of ſinning, or going on in a known ſtate of ſinning.

USE.

USE.

NOw the uſe of all that hath been ſpoken, what is it, but to move all thoſe that have knowledge, to take heed, of ſinning than other men? and thoſe of them that remain in their naturall eſtate, to turn ſpeedily and effectually unto God? For if ſinning againſt knowledge be ſo great an aggravation of ſinning, then of all engagements to repentance, knowledge is the greateſt.

How great an engagement & motive it is to men of knowledge to turn to God, and to take heed of ſinning.

Firſt, thou who haſt knowledge, canſt not ſin ſo cheap as another, who is ignorant: Therefore if thou wilt be wicked, thy wickedneſſe will coſt the ten times more than it would another. Places of much knowledge, and plentifull in the means of grace, are dear places to live in ſinne in. To be drunk, and unclean, after enlightning, and the motions of the Spirit, and powerfull Sermons, is more than twenty times afore; thou mighteſt have committed ten to one, and been damned leſſe. This is condemnation (ſayes Chriſt) *that light came into the world.* Neither canſt thou have ſo much pleaſure in thy ſin as an ignorant perſon; For the conſcience puts forth a ſting in the act, when thou haſt knowledge, and does ſubject thee to bondage and the fear of death. When a man knows how dearly he muſt pay for it, there is an expectation of judgement embittereth all. Therefore the *Gentiles* ſinned with more pleaſure than we. Therefore *Eph.* 4.18,19. the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of them, ſayes, that through *their ignorance*, and *darkneſſe*, and *want of feeling*, they committed ſin *with greedineſſe*, and ſo with more pleaſure; they not having knowledge or hearts ſenſible of the evils that attend upon their courſes.

1.
Such an one cannot ſinne ſo cheap as others, their ſinnes are more coſtly and chargeable.

And will have leſſe pleaſure in ſinning.

Secondly, thou wilt in ſinning againſt knowledge be given up to greater *hardneſs*. *If the light that is in thee be darkneſs* (ſays Chriſt) *how great is that darkneſſe?* therefore the more light a man hath, and yet goes on in works of darkneſſe, the more darkneſſe that man will be left unto, even to a reprobate mind in the end.

2.
Such are given up to greater hardneſſe of heart.

Thirdly, it will procure thee to be given up to the worſt of ſins, more than another man; for God when he leaves men, makes one ſinne the puniſhment of another, and reſerves the worſt for

3.
Such God gives up to the worſt and groſſeſt of ſins.

ſinners againſt knowledge. Theſe *Gentiles*, when *they knew God, they worſhipped him not, God gave them up to the worſt of ſinnes*, whereof they were capable, as *unnaturall uncleanneſſe*, &c. But theſe are not ſinnes great enough for thee, that art a ſinner of the Chriſtians; to be given up to drunkenneſſe, or adultery, &c. otherwiſe than to diſcover thy rottenneſſe, theſe are too ſmall ſinnes; but thou ſhalt be given up to *inward profaneneſſe of heart*, (as *Eſau* was, having been brought up in a good family) ſo as not to *neglect* holy duties onely, but to *deſpiſe* them; to deſpiſe the good Word of God and his Saints, and to hate godlineſſe and the appearance of it; thou ſhalt be given up to contemne God and his Judgements, to *trample under foot the blood of the covenant*, or elſe unto divelliſh opinions; thoſe other are too ſmall to be puniſhments of thy ſinne: For ſtill the end of ſuch an one muſt be *ſeven times worſe than the beginning*, as *Chriſt* ſayes it ſhall; if thou wert a drunkard, a ſwearer, or an unclean perſon before, and thy knowledge wrought ſome alteration in thee, thou ſhalt not haply be ſo now at thy fall, but ſeven times worſe; profane, injurious to Saints, a blaſphemer, or derider of Gods wayes and ordinances.

4. At death knowledge ſinned againſt, gives up to more horror and deſpaire.

Fourthly, when thou commeſt to lay hold on mercy at death, thy knowledge will give thee up to more deſpair than another man. Knowledge, though when it is but newly revealed, it is an help; yet not made uſe of, turnes againſt the ſoul, to wound it, and to work deſpair; and this both becauſe we have ſinned againſt the meanes that ſhould have ſaved us, as alſo becauſe ſuch as ſinne againſt knowledge, ſinne with more preſumption; and the more preſumption in thy life, the more deſpaire thou art apt to fall into at death. Therefore *Eſay* 59.11,12. what brought ſuch trouble, and *roarings like Beares* upon theſe Jewes? and that when ſalvation was looked for, that yet it was ſo farre off from them, in their apprehenſions? *our iniquities* (ſay they) *teſtifie to our face, and we know them.* Now then ſinnes teſtifie to our face, when our conſcience took notice of them, even to our faces, when we were committing them; and then alſo the ſame ſins themſelves will again teſtifie to our faces, when we have recourſe for the pardon of them. Therefore thou wilt lie roaring on thy death bed, and that thou *knoweſt them*, will come as an argu-

argument, that thou ſhalt not have mercy. As ignorance is a plea for mercy, *I did it ignorantly, therefore I obtained mercy*; ſo *I did it knowingly*, will come in as a bar and a plea againſt thee, therefore I ſhall not have mercy.

5. In Hell it increaſeth torment.

Fiftly, both here and in *Hell*, it is the greateſt executioner and tormenter. In this ſenſe it may be ſaid, *Qui auget ſcientiam, auget dolorem*: He that increaſeth knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow, as *Solomon* ſpeakes: for knowledge enlargeth our apprehenſion of our guilt, and that brings more feare and torment. *Have they no knowledge, who eate up my people? Yes, there is their feare* (ſayes *David.*) Therefore *Heb.* 10. 28. after ſinning after knowledge, there *remaines not* onely a more *fearfull puniſhment*, but a more *fearfull expectation* in the parties conſciences. And this is the *worme in hell*, that gnawes for ever. Light breeds theſe wormes.

But then you will ſay, it is beſt for us to be ignorant, and to keep our ſelves ſo.

I anſwer, no: For to *refuſe knowledge* will damne as much as abuſing it. This you may ſee in *Prov.* 1.23. *Ye fooles* (ſayes Wiſdome) *you that hate knowledge, Turne, and I will poure my ſpirit upon you, and make knowne my words to you.* Well, ver. 24. *they refuſed*, and would none of his reproofe: Therefore ſayes God, *I will laugh at your calamity*: that is, I will have no pity, but inſtead of pity, God will laugh at you; *and when your feare comes, I will not anſwer, becauſe ye hated knowledge, ver.* 29. ſo as this is as bad. There remaines therefore no middle way of refuge, to extricate thy ſelfe at, and avoid all this, no remedy but turning unto God: otherwiſe thou canſt not but be more miſerable than other men; yea and this muſt be done ſpeedily alſo: For thou having knowledge, God is quicker in denying thee grace, and in giving thee up to a reprobate mind, than another man, who is ignorant. He will wait upon another that knows not his will & waies, twenty, thirty, forty yeares, as he did upon the Children of the *Iſraelites* that were borne in the wilderneſſe, and had not ſeene his wonders in *Ægypt*, and at the Red ſea: but thoſe that had, he ſoone ſware againſt many of them, *that they ſhould never enter into his reſt. Chriſt comes* as a *ſwift witnes* againſt thoſe to whom the *Goſpel* is preached, *Mal.* 3. 5. he makes quick diſpatch of the treaty of grace with them. Therfore few that have knowledge are conver-

ted when they are old, or that lived long under the meanes. And therefore you that have knowledge, are engaged to repent and to turne to God, and to bring your hearts to your knowledge, and that ſpeedily alſo, or elſe your damnation will not onely be more intolerable than others, but the *ſentence* of it paſſe out more quickly againſt you. Therefore as Chriſt ſayes, *Joh.* 12.36. *Whileſt you have the light, walke in it:* For that day of *Grace*, which is very cleare and bright, is uſually a *ſhort one*. And though men may live many naturall dayes after, and enjoy the common light of the ſun, yet the day of grace, and of gracious excitements to repent, may be but a ſhort one.

AGGRA-

AGGRAVATIONS OF SINNING AGAINST MERCIE:

By exaggerating the *Riches* of common *Mercies* men sinne against.

BY

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As riches, credit, friends, comfort in them all.

AGGRA-

AGGRAVATIONS OF SINNING AGAINST MERCY.

ROM. 2. 4, 5.

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodnes, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodnesse of God leadeth thee to repentance?

But after thy hardnesse and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy selfe wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?

THis is the last and most weighty aggravation which the Apostle puts into the measure of the Gentiles sinfulnesse (which in the former Chapter he had, *verse* 29. pronounced *full* before) to make it fuller yet: *Their sinning against mercies*, and despising the riches of Gods goodnesse, patience, and forbearance, the hatefull evil & iniquity whereof, can be better no way set off and illustrated unto mens consciences, than by a display of the riches of that goodnesse which men sinne against.

My purpose therefore is to unlock and carry you into that more common treasury of outward mercies, and leade you through the severall roomes thereof, all which doe continually *leade* you *unto repentance:* That then reflecting upon our ungratefull waste, and abuse of so many mercies in sinning thereby our sinnes, every sinne, the least, may yet appeare more sinfull unto us, *who are lesse than the least of all those mercies.* Know then,

Epheſ. 2. 7. that beſides that peculiar treaſure of *unſearchable riches of grace laid up in Chriſt*, the offer of which neglected and deſpiſed, addes yet to all that ſinfulneſſe, a guilt as farre exceeding all that which ſhall be ſpoken of, as Heaven exceeds the Earth. There is another untold Mine of *Riches the Earth is full of*, as the *Pſalmiſt* Pſal. 104. 24. tells us, and the Apoſtle here, which theſe Gentiles onely heard of, and which we partake of all as much as they. As there are *riches of grace* offered to you which can never be exhauſted; ſo there are *riches of patience* ſpent upon you, which you will have ſpent out in the end; the expence of which caſt up, will alone amount to an immenſe treaſure, both of guilt in you, and of wrath in God, as theſe words informe us.

To help you in this account, I will,

1. In generall, ſhew what *Goodneſſe*, or Bounty, *Patience*, and *long ſuffering* are in God.

2. That there are *riches* of theſe ſpent upon all the ſons of men.

3. That theſe all *leade men to repentance*. And then

4. I will expoſtulate with you, and aggravate your ſinfulneſſe, in going on to *deſpiſe* all theſe by unrepentance, as the Apoſtle here doth.

Firſt, in that God is ſaid here to be *Good*, or Bountifull: 2. Patient, or *forbearing*: 3. *Long ſuffering*, they ſeem to note out three degrees of his common mercies unto men.

Firſt, he is a *good*, or a *bountifull* God: for ſo, as goodneſſe is here uſed, I exegetically expound it: for though it be true, that *goodneſſe* & *bounty* may differ; yet when *riches of goodneſſe* are ſaid to be communicated, it imports the ſame, & is all one with *Bounty*; And ſuch is God. And all thoſe noble and royall qualifications and properties which concur to make one truly *good*, and *bountifull*, doe meet and abound in him, in all thoſe good things which he doth beſtow; and are found truly in none but in him: ſo that it may be truly ſaid, that *there is none good but God*, as Chriſt ſayes of him.

Now *Bounty*, in the generall, which is in God, may be thus deſcribed.

It is a free, willing, and a large giving of what is meerly his own, looking for no recompence again.

To explain this, that you may ſee, that all theſe conditions are

are required to true goodneſſe, and all of them to be found in God onely.

1. He that is *Bountifull*, he muſt be a *Giver*, and Beſtower of *good* things: and all he beſtows, it muſt be by way of *gift*, not by way of *recompence* unto, or by deſert from the party he beſtowes all on: Therefore Chriſt ſayes, *Luke* 6.33. that *to doe good to thoſe who* have done, or *doe good to us*, *is not thank-worthy*, nor is it *Bounty*. But God is therefore truely *good*, becauſe he ſimply, meerely, and abſolutely *gives* away all which he beſtowes: For he was not, nor can any way become beholden to any of his creatures; nor had formerly received any thing from them, which might move him hereunto; ſo *Rom.* 11.35. *Who hath firſt given him, that he may recompence him againe?* Nay untill He gave us a being, we were not capable of ſo much as receiving any good thing from him. Luke 6.33. Rom. 11.35.

2. He who is truly termed *Good*, or *Bountifull*, all that he gives away muſt be his *owne*; And ſo all which *God* beſtowes, it is his *owne*. So *Pſal.* 24.1. *The Earth is the Lords.* The ground we tread on, the place we dwell in; He is our Landlord. But is that all? for the houſe may be the Landlords, when the furniture is the Tenants: therefore he further addes, *And the fulneſſe of it is his* alſo: that is, all the things that fill the world, all the furniture, and proviſion of it both; all the *moveables*. (So *Pſal.* 50.11.12.) *The cattell and the fowls upon a thouſand hils are mine*, ſayes he; and alſo all the *ſtanding* goods, *the corn and oyl* (which you ſet and plant) *are mine*, *Hoſ.* 2.9. yea and the Pſalmiſt in the ſame 24. Pſalme, addes further, that *they who dwell therein are his* alſo: not the houſe and furniture onely, but the Inhabitants themſelves. And this, by the moſt ſure, and moſt ſoveraigne title that can be, better than that of purchaſe, or inheritance, of and from another: for he hath *made* them; *All is thine*, *becauſe all comes of thee*, ſayes the ſame *David*, 1 *Chron.* 29.11,12. *And all things are* not onely [*of him*] but [*through him*] *Rom.* 11.36. that is, they cannot ſtand nor ſubſiſt without him. Even Kings (the greateſt and moſt bountifull of men) their bounty is but as that of the clouds, which though they ſhowre down plentifully, yet they firſt received all from the Earth below them. Pſal. 24.1. Pſal. 50.11,12. 1 Chron. 29.

3. He muſt give *largely*, it is not Bounty elſe. Now *God* is-

therefore ſaid to be *rich in goodneſſe*, becauſe he is *abundant* in it. So we find it, comparing *Pſal.* 33.5. with *Pſal.* 104. 24. in which it is ſaid, that *the earth is full of his goodneſſe*, and *his riches*; which we may judge of, by what he ſayes in the 27. verſe of that 104. Pſalme, of what an houſe he keeps, and what multitudes he feeds: *All theſe* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *wait on thee, that thou mayeſt give them meat, and thou openeſt thy hand, and they are filled with good.* King *Ahaſuerus*, to ſhew his bountie, made a feaſt to his chiefe Subjects, but it was but for halfe a yeer, and not to all: ſome few halfe yeeres more would well nigh have beggard him; but God doth thus continually. The greateſt and moſt bountifull of men, when they would expreſſe the largeſt of their bountie, ſpeak but of *giving halfe of their Kingdomes* (ſo *Herod*, and he did but talk ſo too) but *God* beſtowes whole *worlds*, and *Kingdomes*, as *Daniel* ſpeakes, *Dan.* 4.35. and *gives them to whom he pleaſe.*

4. He that is *bountifull*, muſt give all he gives *freely*, and *willingly*. Which, though I put together, yet may imply two diſtinct things: As firſt, that he that gives, muſt be a *free agent* in it, who is at his choice, whether he would give any thing away or no. The *Sunne* doth much good to the world, it affords a large light, and even halfe the world at once is full of its glory; yea and all this light is its own, not borrowed, as that of the Moon and Stars is; yet this *Sunne* cannot be called *good* or *bountifull*, becauſe it ſends forth this light *neceſſarily*, and *naturally*; and cannot chuſe but do ſo; nor can it draw in its beams. But *God* is a free giver, he was at his choice, whether he would have made the world or no; and can yet when he pleaſeth, *with-draw his ſpirit and face, and then they all periſh*, *Pſal.* 104. 29. Secondly, it muſt be *willingly* alſo; that is, no way conſtrained, nor by extraction wrung from him, who is to be called *Bountifull*. A *willing minde* in matter of bountie, is more *accepted* than the thing, 2 *Cor.* 8.12. Now of God it is ſaid, *Dan.* 4. 22. that he *gives* the kingdomes of the world *to whom he will*, and none *ſwayes* him, or *can ſtay his hand*, *verſ.* 35. yea he gives all away with *delight*. So *Pſal.* 104. 31. having ſpoken of feeding every living thing, and of other the like works of his goodneſſe, throughout that Pſalme, he concludes with this, *God rejoyceth in all his workes:*

Pſal. 104. 29.

that

that is, doth all the good he doth to his creatures with delight; It doth him good (as it were) to ſee the poore creatures feed.

Laſt of all, *looking for no recompence* for the time to come. This is another requiſite in *Bounty*. Sayes Chriſt, *Luke* 6. 34. *If you give to receive again, as ſinners do*, this is not *thank-worthy*: but verſ. 25. ſo doth not *your heavenly Father*: For (ſayes he) *Do good, and hope for nothing again, ſo ſhall you be like your Father*, and then you ſhall ſh w your ſelves true *children of the* [*moſt High.*] In which word, he inſinuates a reaſon why God gives all thus: becauſe he is ſo great, & ſo High a God, as nothing we doe can reach him; as *David* ſpeakes, *Pſal.* 16.2. *My goodneſſe extends not unto thee*: he is too high to receive any benefit by what we do. And even that thankfulneſſe he exacts, he requires it but as an *acknowledgement of our duty, and for our good, Deut.* 10.12. Luke 6. 34. Pſal. 16. 2.

And ſo much for the firſt, namely, what *goodneſſe* and *bountie* is: and how *God* is truely *good*, and he *onely* ſo. But this attribute of his, and the effects of it, he exerciſeth towards all our fellow creatures, and did to *Adam* in Paradiſe. But now to *us ward* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) namely the ſons of *men*, now fallen, he extendeth and manifeſts a further *riches*, namely, of *patience* and *long ſuffering*, which the *devils* partake not of, the good Angels and other creatures that ſinned not, are uncapable of. For as Chriſt ſaies, *Luke* 6.35. In what he beſtowes on us, *he is kind* to ſuch, as are *evil and unthankfull*. *Mercie* is more than *goodneſſe*, for *mercy* alwayes doth reſpect *miſery*: and becauſe all the creatures are *ſubject* to a *miſery*, *Rom.* 8.20,21,22. *of bondage and vanity*, therefore *his tender mercies are over all his workes*. But ye *patience* is a further thing than *mercy*, (as *mercy* is than *goodneſſe*) being exercciſed, not towards *miſerable* creatures onely, but towards *ſinners*, and includes in it more three things further towards them. Luke 6. 35.

1. Not only that thoſe perſons he doth good unto do offend, and injure him; but that himſelf alſo is exceeding ſenſible of all thoſe wrongs, and moved by them, and alſo provoked to wrath thereby; it is not patience elſe. So in 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. It is not *ſlackneſſe* (ſayes he there:) *God is not ſlack*: that is, he ſits not in heaven as one of the Idol gods, that regarded not what acts were kept here belowe; or took not to heart mens carriages towards

wards him; but is *long ſuffering*, or *patient*; that is, he apprehends himſelfe wronged, is fully ſenſible of it; *is angry with the wicked every day*, he hath much adoe to forbear, even when he doth forbear, and letteth them alone; he exerciſeth an attribute, a vertue, towards them, namely, *patience*, in keeping in of his anger; which is as to *keep fire* in ones boſome.

Pſal. 7. 11.

But ſecondly, this is not all; he doth not ſimply forbear, and reſtrain his anger, but vouchſafeth that *time* he forbears them in, that they might *repent* in it; and his *mercies*, as means *leading to repentance*. So it follows in that 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *But God is long ſuffering to us-ward*, and his long ſuffering hath this in it, *not willing that any ſhould periſh, but come unto repentance*. So alſo *Revel.* 2. 21. it is called *ſpace to repent*. And all the bleſſings he vouchſafeth, he gives them as meanes and guides to *lead them to repentance* as here. And *Matth.* 18. 29. Have *patience* with me and I will *pay* thee all. That is, give me a longer day and ſpace to pay the debt in, and be willing to accept it when I bring it, and let me lie out of priſon, that I may be enabled to pay it.

Revel. 2. 21.

Matth. 18. 29.

Thirdly, there is yet a further thing in his *patience*, namely, a *waiting*, and expectation that men would come in, and *repent*. So *Luke* 13. 17. *Theſe three yeeres have I* [*come ſeeking*] *fruit, but have found none*: There was an expectation, a longing, a deſire it would bring forth fruit, *Oh when ſhall it once be!* ſayes God, *Jer.* 13. laſt.

Luke 13. 17.

In the laſt place, that other attribute of *long ſuffering*, which is the third, is but as a further degree of *patience*; *but patience lengthened out farther*, that is, when *God* hath been thus *patient*, hath forborn and waited for their comming in, and that not for *three yeers*, but haply *thirty*, *fourty* yeers, and ſtill they turne not; his patience then begins (as we would think) to be (as it were) worne out, and his anger begins to ariſe, as if he could forbeare no longer; (as it was towards that tree, *Why cumbreth it the ground? Cut it downe*) yet he goes on to ſpare a man another yeere, and many more yeares ſtill after that; and *endureth with much long ſuffering* (as *Rom.* 9. 22.) *the veſſels of wrath*, endures to wonderment, above meaſure, beyond all expectation, all patience, as it were; this is *long ſuffering*.

The ſecond generall head is, that there are [*riches*] of this his *goodneſſe*, &c. expended on us.

It

It is a *rich* goodneſſe, patience and long ſuffering: *Rich* in *themſelves*, in regard of their *abundance*, as they came from him; and *rich* alſo in regard of their *precious uſefulneſſe unto us*, as they may be improved by us.

Firſt, *in themſelves* they are *rich:* if we conſider what is expended, all that while, He layes out, not ſimply his *power* to ſuſtain and uphold all things, and to maintaine us freely: ſo to do is nothing to him. For whileſt he doth but ſo, nothing goes out of purſe, or is detracted from him; (as I may ſo ſpeak) he feeles not the expence either of power, providence, &c. All this coſt him but words: For he *upholds all, creates all by the word of his power*, *Hebr.* 1. And thus to maintaine the Angels, and to have maintained all mankinde before they fell, had beene no more. But (my brethren) when now he maintains us ſinners, not ſimply *power* goes forth from him, but his *glory* is expended, and taken from him, and for the while waſted, detracted from; he loſeth, at preſent, every day infinitely by us, and he is ſenſible of it; every ſin takes glory from him, *robs* him, as he himſelf complaines: that he *who made the world, upholds it*, (keepes it together, as the hoops doe the barrell, it would fall to pieces elſe, to nothing; *in whom all live*, as fiſhes in the Sea, yea upon whom all live) that He ſhould live *unknown*, unthought of, unſerved; yea diſgraced, diſhonoured in the world, and have this world loſt to him, as it were; and ſinne, the Devill, wicked men, to have all the glory from him, to be exalted, to carry the whole world afore them: This ſpends upon him, he had need of Riches to doe this. Hebr. 1. John 1.10.

Secondly, conſider the multitude of ſinners, that thus ſpend, and live upon theſe riches, no leſſe than all the world: He had need of multitudes of patience in him: He forbeares not one, but all and every one. We looke upon one man, and ſeeing him very wicked, we wonder God cuts him not off; we wonder at our ſelves, that God did not cut us off before this, when once our eyes are opened: nay then caſt your eyes over all the world, and ſtand amazed at Gods forbearance towards it. Take the richeſt man that ever was, to have millions of men in his debt, it would undoe him ſoone. All the world are in Gods debt, and run ſtill in debt every day more and more, and yet he breakes not, nay breakes not them.

Nay thirdly, to manifeſt this abundance yet more, conſider not onely the multitude he forbeares, but the time he hath done it: to forbeare much, and to forbeare it long: he hath forborn, and beene out of purſe from the beginning of the world, ſince men were upon the face of the earth, five thouſand yeeres and a halfe already; and how long it is yet to the day of Judgement, we know not: And yet ye ſee, He is as *patient*, and as *bountifull* now in the latter dayes of the world, as he was at the firſt. Did that greateſt convert that ever was, that had not lived paſt thirty yeers in his ſinfull eſtate (for he was young when he held the ſtoners clothes that ſtoned *Stephen*) and *yet was the chiefeſt of ſinners*, did he yet (as himſelfe ſayes) thinke himſelfe *a patterne of long ſuffering*, 1 *Tim.* 1.16. thought it a great matter God ſhould forbeare ſo long? what is the whole world then? if he, being but one ſmall poore veſſell, was ſo richly laden with the riches of Gods patience, how is this great bark of the world then fraught, that hath gone over ſo vaſt a gulfe of time? how much of theſe his riches have been laden in it?

1 Tim. 1. 16.

And then fourthly, adde to this the expenſive prodigality of all theſe ſinners in all ages; every ſinner ſpends ſomething, and how laviſh are men of oathes? *All the thoughts of mens hearts from their youth up, they are evil and onely evil, and continually*: and how much then hath every man ſpent him? every ſin is a debt.

In the ſecond place, this is a *rich* goodneſſe and patience in regard of the *preciouſneſſe* and *uſefulneſſe*.

Firſt, *precious*, in regard of what all theſe manifeſtations of his goodneſſe and forbearance coſt, even the blood of his Sonne, *who as a Lord hath bought and purchaſed all wicked men*; their lives, and their reprivall, all that time that here they live; and all the bleſſings and diſpenſations of goodneſſe, which here they do enjoy. Chriſts mediation ſo farre prevails with God for all the world, that it puts a ſtop to the preſent proceedings of juſtice, which otherwiſe had ſaid of all, *that day thou ſinneſt, thou dieſt*. So that as Chriſt may be called the *wiſdom* and the *power* of God; ſo alſo the *patience* and the *long ſuffering* of God. For, for his ſake, and through his meanes, it is exerciſed: God would not ſhew a drop of mercie, but for his Son. Which, I take, ſtrongly and clearly intimated, in that dealing of his with the Jewes,

2 Pet. 3. 2.

(*Exod.* 23.

*Exod.*23.20.compared with *Ex.*33.2,3,4.&c. Immediately after God had given the Law, (by the rules and threatnings whereof, God the Father in his government was to proceed)& after they had transgressed it, He there declares, that he could not *go with them: For*(according to the rules of his government)*he should destroy them; but his Angel, he would send with them*, even Christ, he might shew them mercy,for he was the purchaser of it: and that he was that Angel,appears,in that God tels them, *vers.*21 *that his name was in him*, who also would destroy them,if they turned not and repented,according to the rules of his Law,the Gospel.

And *precious*, secondly, *to us*, in regard of the *usefulnesse*, this goodnesse and long suffering tend and serve unto. This makes this stock of time afforded you, by Gods goodnesse, to be riches indeed, that *it is space to repent*; not a time of reprivall onely, but to get a pardon in; and this makes all the good things we enjoy to be precious indeed, that they are meanes, *leading us* by the hand to *Repentance*. *Rich* it is, because if your time be laid out as it ought, you may obtain those farre surpassing *riches of glory* reserved for hereafter; Win, and gain Christ by it, and all his *unsearchable riches*. All things receive their worth and valuation from what they tend to, and from what depends upon them, and the use they might be put to. A *Bond*, a *mans will*, which in it self (as it is a piece of parchment) is not worth one shilling; yet an estate of many thousands many lie and depend upon them. And so time is not simply precious in it selfe, but in regard of the opportunities of it. And accordingly, in those ordinarie passages of our lives,do we,more or lesse,estimate and count time precious, as the businesse allotted to it, is of more or lesse consequence: when a matter falls out that concerns us, and requires dispatch, and we are cast into straits of time about it, we count every minute precious: so this *time* of ours (which is the chief and principall of that stock, put into our hands by Gods patience) being *space to repent in*, to gaine and trade for heaven with, in this respect every minute of it, is as much as heaven is worth, and one houre of it may be as much as all the time you are to spend for ever, after this life ended: every minute hath an influence into eternity. And how ever you may account it, yet the balance of the Sanctuary thus estimates your time, cals it

Rev.2.21.

Iſa. 55. 2. *your money: Why lay you out your money for what is not? &c. (i. e.)* this precious day of grace, and the thoughts, cares and endeavours which are brought forth and minted in this time allotted:) theſe are your money, you might purchaſe heaven by. And thus it hath been eſteemed by holy and godly men, who yet had leſſe need to value it, having done the maine buſineſſe it was allotted for. *David* in the 39. *Pſal.* 13. being brought very lowe, *Oh ſpare me a little, that I may recover my ſtrength, before I goe hence, and be ſeen no more.* So *Hezekiah, Iſai.* 38. how did he ſue for, and when he had obtained fifteene yeers, how did he bleſſe God? verſ. 20. or if by this you judge not ſo, thinke with thy ſelfe, what at the day of death thou wouldeſt account of an houre, of a moneth, a yeer? what others, who have lain gaſping, would have given a world for time again, as I have heard one crying day and night (*call time againe*) or if not then, oh what in Hell!

The third thing I am to ſhew, is, that all this *goodneſſe, patience,* and *forbearance*, is afforded towards you as a meanes, and helps to bring you to repentance. *Acts* 17. 28. *God* (ſayes the Apoſtle there) *hath allotted* to men, both their *times* to live in, and alſo their places of abode and *habitations*, all richly furniſhed with bleſſings to uphold their lives and beings. And to what end are both theſe thus afforded? That they *might ſeek the Lord, if by groping after him* (even as men in the dark) *they might haply finde him.* But men being in the darke, and deſtitute of guides to bring them unto God, may yet be as far off finding him as ever. Therefore adde but the words of my text, to what the Apoſtle ſayes there, and we ſee, that this goodneſſe of God takes us by the hand, and *leads us to repentance*; to turn from ſin unto God, and ſo to finde him. And thus led are you unto God, by the help of three ſeverall guides, which each after other ſweetly lead you, and point *you out to this.*

Acts 17. 26, 27, 28.

First, all this goodneſſe beares witneſſe to your hearts of a gracious hand that extends it ſelfe in all theſe; therefore in that 17. of the *Acts*, he ſubjoynes, *God is not far off any of us.* That there is a good God beſtowes all things on you, is a thought lies at next doore of all his bleſſings, not far off. Yea *they all* (ſayes the Apoſtle to the ſame Gentiles, *Acts* 14. 16.) *doe beare witneſſe of him*, (though they *went on in their owne wayes*) *yet* (ſayes he there

Acts 14. 16.

there) *God left not himſelfe without witneſſe*; that is, an impreſſion on their hearts that his good hand beſtowed all on them, when *he filled their hearts with foode and gladneſſe.*

Secondly, His goodneſſe having brought thus God to mens thoughts, then your owne conſciences take you, and leade you downe into your ſelves, and beare witneſſe, that you by walking in your owne wayes, doe nothing but provoke and offend this good God. So *Rom.*2.15.

And then thirdly, there is an indelible principle common to all men to *love thoſe who love them*; which after the two former have brought you hitherto, point you to *Repentance*, as the concluſion. [*Shall we goe on to ſinne againſt this good, ſo good? returne evil for good?*] Is not this a naturall neceſſary conſequent out of all theſe, to ſay as they, *Let us therefore feare the Lord, who giveth us the early and the latter raine*, as it is *Jere.*5. 26. 27. And though men are ſaid not *to know this*, in the text, yet the meaning is, they doe not throughly and effectually conſider thus much, ſo as thereby to be brought to Repentance, yet however there is ſuch a witneſſe of all this in all mens hearts, and thus are they led on unto Repentance, would they ſee their way and follow their guide. Luke 6. Jer.5.26,27.

The uſe ſhall be an uſe of expoſtulation (as here the Apoſtle carryes it) with men ſinfull and impenitent, for going on to ſinne againſt all this mercy; together with an aggravation of their ſinfulneſſe hereby. Men, if young, doe uſually take the advantage of this their precious time, (which of ſo much long ſuffering is vouchſafed them) and of all thoſe precious opportunities, and bleſſings they enjoy, to improve them onely, in reaping and gathering in to themſelves the pleaſures of ſinnes; making the time of youth their harveſt of ſinning; and yet thinke to eſcape by repenting, afterwards: and then when old, after they have already enjoyed a long and a faire Sunſhine day to turne to God in, and to have ſowne much ſeed to the Spirit, the comfort wherof they might now have reaped; yet as they have altogether neglected ſo to doe all their youth, ſo they goe on to doe ſo ſtill, whilſt they ſee they have any day left, be it never ſo neare the ſetting: and do chooſe rather deſperately to venture their eſtate in the world to come, upon the riches of his mercie pardoning,

(though without all care and endeavour to change their hearts or lives) upon the experience they have had of the riches of his mercy forbearing them in this world, thinking to finde him the ſame in both. With all ſuch, let me reaſon a little, and from the *riches of Gods goodneſſe, patience, &c.* ſpent upon them, at once expoſtulate with them, for their impenitency, and aggravate to them their ſinfulneſſe, and alſo, if poſſible, prevail with them to goe on to deſpiſe it thus no longer. And if there be any principle of common ingenuity, any ſparke (I doe not ſay of grace, but of goodneſſe of nature) left unextinguiſht, me thinkes it ſhould affect you, and do ſome good on you ere I have done.

And to that end, conſider a little, and compare together Gods loving kindneſſes towards you, and your unkind dealings towards him.

To begin at the beginning of thy beeing: how much riches of goodneſſe were there laid and buried in thy foundation? when the firſt corner ſtone was laid, when thou wert made a man, (beſides the coſt which hath been ſpent upon this building ſince) &, curſed as thou art, even that very foundation was laid in bloodie *iniquities*, in which thou wert *conceived*; and the very materials of ſoul and body, thou conſiſteſt of, being tempered with ſin, *like the ſtone in the wall, and beame out of the timber*, cry out every moment to God againſt thee, as *Edom* did, *Raſe it, raſe it, even to the verie ground.*

Hab. 2.10,11.

Pſal. 137.7.

Conſider how but the other day thou wert meere nothing, and when an infinite number that never were nor ſhall be, were in as great a poſſibility of being as thou, (for when he made this world, he could have laid it aſide wholly, and created millions of other worlds) yet he choſe thee to have a roome in this, but one world, (for he meanes to make no more) and this world could have ſtood without thee, and did before thou wert, and ſhall do when thou art gone: yet he called thee forth out of nothing, and by his Almightie power, bade thee ſtand forth when there was no need of thee. I ſay he choſe thee to have a being: for as there is an election of things that are to ſalvation, ſo out of things that were not unto being. And wretch that thou art, if thou repenteſt not, thou deſtroyeſt what God hath made, and hadſt better have kept nothing ſtill, and never have peept out, or elſe

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to skulk into thy firſt nothing again, for thou art *loſt, better never to have been born.*

Secondly, Conſider yet more *goodneſſe.* Thou mighteſt have beene admitted into the loweſt form of creatures, have beene a worme, a flea, a flie, which we men fillip and cruſh to death at pleaſure: but to be made a *Man*, created one of the States, Barons, Lords of the world the firſt houre, admitted into the higheſt order, crowned a King in the womb, as *David* ſayes of man, *Pſal.* 8. 5. *made a little lower than the Angels*, but *crowned* with glory and honour; *made to have dominion over all the Workes of his hands.* The one halfe of thee is more worth than a whole world, [thy ſoul] as Chriſt ſayes, that went to the price of ſouls; upon which God hath beſtowed an eternitie of being, and made it the picture of his face, his Image, when other creatures doe weare but his footſteps. And the body the other peece, and indeed but the *Caſe*, the *Sheath*, (as *Daniels* phraſe, and the Chaldee hath it, *Dan.* 7. 15.) *of thee*, what a curious workmanſhip is it? *Wonderfully and fearfully made*, as *David* ſayes, *Pſalm.* 139. 15. *curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the earth.* So there he calls the womb; becauſe as curious workmen, when they have ſome choice piece in hand, perfect it in private, and then bring it forth to light for men to gaze at: So God out of a teare, a drop, he hath limmed out the Epitome of the whole world; the Index of all the creatures. *Sun, moone, ſtarres, are to be* found in thee. And yet wretch as thou art, thou art withall the Epitome of hell, and broughteſt into the world with thee, the ſeeds and principles of all the villanies, that have beene acted in the world, and if thou repenteſt not, thou hadſt better have beene a toad, or ſerpent, the hatefulleſt of creatures; and wouldſt change thy condition with them one day.

Pſal. 8. 5.

Pſal. 139. 15.

Eccl. 12. 2.

Thirdly, being a man, haſt thou all thy members that belong unto a man? it is becauſe *he wrote them all in his booke*, *Pſal.* 139. 16. if he had left out an eye in his common-place booke, thou hadſt wanted it; is not that a mercy? ask the blinde. If thou hadſt wanted thoſe windows to looke out at, thy body would have been a dungeon, the world a priſon. If a Tongue (*which is thy glory*) or an eare, thou hadſt lived among men, as a beaſt among men. And yet when God gave thee all theſe, what did he

he but put weapons into an enemies hand? for haſt thou not uſed
Rom.6. all theſe, *as weapons of unrighteouſneſſe*? Inſomuch as *the tongue* but *one member*, is called *a world of iniquity* by the Apoſtle; and if thou repenteſt not, thou hadſt better (as Chriſt ſayes) have entered into the world without an eye, an eare, a tongue, than with theſe goe for ever into Hell.

Fourthly, when thou wert taken out of the womb, (where thou didſt remaine, but whileſt thou wert a framing) what a ſtately palace hath he brought thee into, [the world] which thou findeſt prepared, and ready furniſht with all things for thy maintenance, as *Canaan* was to the Children of Iſrael; a ſtately houſe thou buildedſt not, trees thou plantedſt not, a rich Canopy ſpangled, ſpread as a Curtaine over thy head; he ſets up a Taper
Pſal.104.23. for thee to work by [the Sunne] *till thou art weary*, *Pſal.*104.23. and then it goes downe without thy bidding, for *it knowes its going downe*, *verſ.* 19. then he drawes a curtaine over halfe the world, that men may goe to reſt, *thou cauſeſt darkneſſe*, *and it is night*, *verſ.*20. An houſe this world is, ſo curiouſly contrived, that to every room of it, even to every poor village, ſprings do come
Pſal.104.10. 11. as pipes to find thee water. So *Pſal.*104. 10,11. The pavement of which houſe thou treadeſt on, brings forth thy food, *verſe* 14. *Bread for ſtrength*, *wine to cheere thy heart*, *oyle to make thy face to ſhine*, *verſ.* 15. Which three are there ſynecdochically put for all things needfull to ſtrength, ornament, and delight. The very *chambers* of that houſe (as *David* calls them) *drop fatneſſe*, and water the earth, *verſ.* 13. He wheeles the heavens about, and ſo ſpins out time for thee, every moment of which time brings forth ſome bleſſing or other, and no one is barren. Therefore *Pſal.*65.11. *the yeer is ſaid to be crowned with goodneſſe*: a diadem of goodneſſe encircles it round: and yet thou haſt filled this world thou thus art brought into, with nothing but rebellions, as he hath done with bleſſings, and haſt piled up ſinnes to heaven; and thou haſt preſſed all theſe armies of bleſſing thou findeſt the world filled with, to fight againſt their Maker, under the Devils banner, whom thy wickedneſſe ſets up as the *god of this world*. And as the yeere is crowned with goodneſſe, ſo thy yeers with wickedneſſe, and no moment is barren; *but all thy imaginations are evil continually*. Yea thou haſt ſinned *againſt heaven*

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and earth and *ſubjected the whole creation unto vanity*, laden the earth, and filled it ſo with wickedneſſe, that *it groanes*, the axel-tree of it is even ready to crack under thee, and the *ground* thou treadeſt on to *ſpue thee out*.

Fiftly, ſince thou cameſt into the world, what a long time hath God ſuffered thee to live in it? he hath not ſpared thee *three yeeres* onely, (as he did the figtree) but *thirty, forty*. And when thou firſt madeſt bold to thruſt forth thy trayterous head into the world, Death (which thy ſinne brought into the world with it) might have arreſted thee, and told thee, this world was no place for thee, for hell is only *our own place*, *Acts* 1.25. thou ſhouldeſt have beene executed the firſt day. And is not ſo much time of eaſe from puniſhment infinite mercy? Caſt but your thoughts upon the Angels that fell, that have beene in hell from the moment of their ſinning; doe but thinke with your ſelves, what they would give to have ſo much time cut out of that eternity they are to run through, and to have it ſet apart for eaſe, and to be void of torment; if the rich man in hell, made it ſuch a great ſuit, and counted it ſo great a favour to have but one drop of water (which could but for a little while ſcarce more then a moment) have cooled and eaſed, not his whole body, but the tip of his tongue onely) how much more would he have thought it mercy, to have lived ſo many yeares againe as he had done free from torment? what is it then for thee, to live ſo many yeares free from the falling of the leaſt drop of that wrath, whereof the full vialls ſhould have been poured out many yeares agoe? The ſame Law was out againſt us, which was out againſt the Angels; *That day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt die the death*: what put the difference? the Apoſtle tells us, his *long-ſuffering to us-ward*: not to them: for in *Chap.* 2.4. he had told us that he *ſpared* not the *Angels which fell*, but poſted, and threw them into hell, as ſoone as they had ſinned.

Act. 1.25.

2 Pet. 3.9.

Sixtly, But further, in the 6. place; Is this all? hath it beene barely a time of eaſe given thee, a time of reprivall? No, it hath beene more, *ſpace to repent*, and ſo to obtaine thy pardon in, *Rev.* 2.21. And as it hath bin more than eaſe of torment unto thee, ſo alſo conſider it hath beene more than ſlackneſſe in him that hath afforded it to thee, as the Apoſtle there doth tell us.

It is not that he hath tooke no notice of thy offending him, but he is ſenſible of every idle thought, of every oath, vain word, and as the Scripture tels us, *he is pained at the very heart*, in ſo much as *he repents* that ever he made thee; he *is angry with thee every day* thou riſeſt, every time he lookes on thee, when ever he meets thee going into the Taverne to be drunk, the whorehouſe to be uncleane, when he meets thee reeling in the ſtreets, he hath much adoe to forbeare killing thee, as he had to forbear *Moſes* when he met him in the Inne: He is ready to have a blow at thee, and it ſhould not need be any great ſtroake, or fetching his arme about; if he did but blow on thee, thou wert conſumed. To ſuffer thee to live, doth therefore coſt him much riches of patience; but to cut thee off, need coſt him nothing: he can doe that with eaſe. But further, all is joyned with a *willingneſſe* that thou ſhouldeſt *repent*, and *not periſh*, as that place tells thee. Gen. 6.

It were much mercy for a Traytor to be reprived, to have a leaſe of his life for twenty yeeres, though there were no hope nor meanes of obtaining his finall pardon after that time ſpent, and this alſo, though but for one treaſon, and though all that time of his reprivall he carryes and behaves himſelfe never ſo obediently. But unto thee, this time hath been more than a longer day of life, and putting off the execution (which for the guilt of that firſt rebellion ſhould have been acted on thee in the womb) it hath been time *to repent in*: And yet hath not this time of thy reprivall made thee ſo much the more rebellious? and haſt not thou ſpent all this time in making up the meaſure of thine iniquity full? and hath it beene willingneſſe onely in God that thou ſhouldeſt not periſh? yea more, joyned with waiting alſo, when it ſhould once be, thinking the time long, as longing and deſiring that thou wouldſt repent, that he might pardon thee. Thus *Jerem.* 13. laſt, God expreſſeth himſelfe, *When ſhall it once be?* yea and conſider how many dayes of payment have beene ſet, and how many promiſes made, and broken all by thee, and yet ſtill he waiteth unto wonderment. Thou receiveſt preſſe money at thy Baptiſme, when thou didſt promiſe to forſake the devill and all his workes, and to begin to ſerve him, when thou ſhouldſt begin to diſcerne betweene good and evill. But no ſooner did the light of knowledge dawne in thy heart, but thou be-

beganſt to fight againſt him ; and thy firſt thoughts to this day have beene onely and continually evill. And then (haply) in thy younger yeeres, before thou hadſt taſted of the pleaſures of ſin, he gave thee an inkling, by meanes of thy education, of his goodneſſe towards thee, and of that happineſſe to be had in him, and thou hadſt the firſt offer of him, ere thy tender years were poyſoned by the world ; and he hath dealt with thee again and againe, both by his Word and Spirit; not *waited* only, but *Wooed* thee, and hath been a ſuiter to thy heart long : and I appeal to your hearts, how many promiſes you have made him, of turning from all your rebellions to him, after ſuch a Sermon, which was brought powerfully home : In ſuch a ſickneſſe, and in ſuch a ſtrait, thy conſcience knowes full well : And ſtill God hath made tryall of thee and given thee longer day ; and though thou haſt broke with him againe and againe, yet he hath forborne thee againe and againe, and hath waited this twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, ſixty yeers, when thou ſhouldeſt come in, and be as good as thy word, and ſtill thou haſt failed him. And yet behold and wonder, and ſtand confounded at the riches of his long ſuffering, that after ſo many yeeres expence and promiſes broken by thee, expectations failed in him, and many mockeries of him, after all this he is yet willing to accept of the remainder, if thou wouldſt *ſpend the reſt of the time, left thee in the fleſh, according to his will*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, 1 *Pet.*4.3. even to loſe principall, uſe, and all, for what is paſt, and requires but the ſame compoſition was propounded the firſt day; yea and not only ſo, but with promiſe to become a debtor unto thee, to beſtow further riches on thee than ever yet thou ſaweſt, or art able to conceive: yea and all this, when he could have his peny worths out of thee another way, and loſe not one farthing by thee, but by puniſhing thee in hel, recover all *to the utmoſt*. 1 Pet. 4.3.

Neither, ſeventhly, hath it beene barely and ſimply an act of *patience* and *forbearance*, though joyned with this willingneſſe, thou ſhouldſt not periſh ; or meerely a permiſſive act of ſuffering thee to live. But God ſhewes forth yet more riches of goodneſſe joyned with this long ſuffering ; *in him ye live, and move, and have your being* ; and doſt thou live in him onely ? nay thou liveſt on him alſo, upon his coſt and charges ; *I have hung upon thee* (ſayes *David*) *from my mothers wombe*. And conſider what thy

life is, that of ſo ſmall a bottome, he ſhould ſpin out ſo long a thred! had he not drawne it out of his owne power, as the ſpider doth her web out of her own bowels, it had beene at an end the ſecond minute; to maintaine that *radicall moiſture*, that *oyle* that feeds the lampe, and light of thy life, that *radicale balſamum*, this is as great a miracle as the maintaining the *oyle in the cruze* of the poore famiſhed widow. And further yet, hath he maintained thee only? Nay more, hath he not defended thee, took thy part, protected thee, tooke thee under his wing, as the hen doth her chickens, to ſhelter thee from thoſe many dangers thy life hath beene expoſed unto? Otherwiſe, how many wayes, ere this, hadſt thou beene ſnatcht away out of the land of the living? Is thy caſe, the caſe of the *figtree* onely, which before we mentioned, that when God cryed, *Cut it downe*, another cryed, *ſpare it?* but there have beene many have cryed, *Cut thee downe*, and God hath cryed, *ſpare thee:* there is never a minute, but the devils would have had a blow at thy life, as he longed to have had at *Jobs*. That thou, a poore lump of fleſh, ſhouldſt walk through, and in the midſt of ſuch an hoſt of fierce and cruell enemies, whoſe hearts are ſwelled with malice at thee, and God ſhould ſay to them all, concerning thee, as he did to *Laban* concerning *Jacob*, *Touch not this man.* And yet if thou wert not liable to their malice and power, yet conſider how many dangers and caſualties, beſides, thou haſt beene kept in, and from; as falls, drowning, killing many wayes, how often have the arrowes of death come whisking by thee, took away thoſe next thee, (haply of thy kindred, brother, ſiſter, yoke-fellow, of the ſame houſe, family with thy ſelfe) and yet have miſſed thee? And if we looke no farther than theſe dayes of mortality we have lived in; two great plagues in this Kingdome, how have the moſt of us all here ſurvived, and now the third is increaſing and growing upon us? To have our lives in ſuch *deare yeares* of time, when to *have our life for a prey* is mercy enough, as *Jeremy* told *Baruch*! that theſe arrowes ſhould flie round about us, over our heads, and miſſe us! that Gods arreſts ſhould ſeize upon men, walking, talking with us, and ſpare us! how often, many other wayes, hath thy neck been upon the block, and the axe held over, and yet hath fallen beſides! To goe no farther than thy owne body,

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the humours thereof, if God ſhould not reſtraine them, would overflow and drowne it, as the waters would the earth, if God ſhould not ſay to them, *ſtay your proud waves.* And when in a ſickneſſe they have been let out, yet God hath kept a ſluce, that ſo much ſhould break forth, and no more, which ſhould purge, and waſh the body, and make it more healthfull, as the overflowing of *Nilus* doth. And when then thy body hath been brought low and weak, and like a crazy rotten ſhip in a ſtorme, taking in water on all ſides, ſo that all the Phyſitians in the world could not have ſtopt thoſe Leakes; he hath rebuked winde and ſea, hath careened, mended thee, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as ſound, and ſtrong as ever; and God hath ſaid, as *Job* 33. that *Thou ſhouldſt not die.* In a word, if thou conſider but what thy life is, and the dangers it is ſubject to, thou wilt acknowledge it is as great a wonder to preſerve it, as to ſee a glaſſe that hath been in continuall uſe, gone through many hands, and hath had many knocks, and falls, to be kept for forty, fifty, ſixty yeers whole and unbroken: God hath carryed *thy life in his hand*, as it were a candle in a paper lanthorn in a ſtrong windy night, & kept it fr̄ being extinct when as we often ſee in many, that a little cold comes but in at a little crany, & *blows their candle out*, as *Job* ſpeaks. Job 33.

And eightly, how have theſe yeeres and houres of thy time been filled up with goodneſſe? and with how many comforts? For a Traytor to live, though but upon bread and water all his dayes, what favour is it? and ſo hadſt thou lived all this time, never ſo miſerably, though *all thy dayes thou hadſt eaten thy bread in darkneſſe, and hadſt had much ſorrow with thy ſickneſſe,* (as *Solomon* ſpeaks.) Some there are, who, as *Job* ſpeaks, *Job* 21.13. *die in the bitterneſſe of their ſoules, and never eat with pleaſure*, ſcarce ſeeing a good day; and if this had beene thy caſe, yet this is infinite mercy. Even whatſoever is on this ſide Hell, is mercy. *Lam.* 3.22. ſay they in the worſt eſtate the Church was ever on earth, *It is thy* [*mercies.*] not *mercy* onely, but multitude of mercies are ſhewne us, *that we are not conſumed, becauſe his mercies are renewed every morning.* If at the brink of hell, and not in, it is mercy. But hath he not all this while *filled thy heart with food and gladneſſe*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Acts* 14.17? It were infinite to goe over the particular kinds of common com- Eccleſ. 5.17. Job 21.15. Lamen. 3.22. Acts 14.17.

forts, which God vouchſafes men here: not halfe the riches of his goodneſſe is yet told: It would require an age to make an Inventory of them. Haſt a houſe in the world to hide thy head in, and keep thee from the injuries of the weather? (which was more than Chriſt had) God he is thy *Landlord*, (though it may be thou payeſt him no rent;) *he* it is that *builds the houſe*, *Pſa.*127. Pſal.41.3. 1. Haſt a bed to lie upon? he *makes* it, eſpecially *in thy ſickneſſe*, *Pſal.* 41.3. Haſt thou *ſleep?* (which is the nurſe of nature, the parentheſis of all thy cares and griefes,) he rocks thee aſleepe Pſal.127.2. every night; and as he gives thee a houſe, ſo he gives thee *reſt*. It is God keepes off thoſe gnatts of diſtracting cares, and griefes, and thoughts, and terrors of conſcience, would buz about a man, and keep one continually waking. And when thou ſleepeſt, *is thy ſleepe pleaſant* to thee? *Go! makes it* ſo. Haſt thou clothes Jer.31.26. to cover thy nakedneſſe? reade old *Jacobs* Indentures, *Gen.*28.20. Gen.28.20. and thou ſhalt ſee by them whoſe ſinding they are at; if *Thou wilt give me rayment*, that is one of his conditions mentioned. Yea, doe thy cloathes *keep thee warme*? even this is attributed to him, *Job* 37.17. He fills thee, feeds thee, *ſpreads thy table*, Job.37,17. ſerves thee, *fills thy cup*, as *David* deſcribes his goodneſſe, *Pſa.*23.5. and gives thee thy *meat in due ſeaſon*; and hath not failed thee a meales meat, but thou haſt had it at thy *appointed time*, as *Job* ſpeaks. And haſt thou health? which is the ſalt to all theſe bleſſings, (without which thou wouldſt ſay, *thou hadſt no pleaſure in* Exod.15.26. *them*) He is the *God of thy health*, and keeps off diſeaſes. *Exo.*15. 26. *I will put none of thoſe diſeaſes on thee*; *I am the Lord who healeth thee*; that is, preſerve thee from them which elſe would ſeize on thee. And theſe mercies he vouchſafeth unto you that Pſal.68.19. are the pooreſt, and *load you with theſe* and the like *benefits every day*.

But haſt thou *Riches* added to theſe, and abundance? *The bleſſing of God maketh rich*, *Prov.* 10.22. Though thou hadſt them by birth, yet he made thoſe friends, and parents of thine, but feoffees in truſt for thee: they were no more, it was God who bequeathed them, *Eccl.* 2. laſt. Or whether thou haſt got them ſince by thine owne induſtry, it is he *gives thee power to get* Deut.8.18. *wealth*, *Deut.* 8.18. *Prov.*12.24. and out of *a ſmall eſtate maketh men great*, *Job* 8.7. It is he by his providence hath ſtopt the ſecret

cret iſſues and draines of expence, at which other mens eſtates runne out; hath ſtopt *that hole in the bottome of the bag*, as the Prophet ſpeaks. And with theſe riches hath he given *thee a heart to uſe them*. This, as it is a *farther mercy*, *Eccleſ.*5:19. and cha.6.2. ſo alſo from him, as it is noted there.

Or haſt thou *credit* (which is better than riches? ſo ſayes *Solomon*, *Prov.*22.1.) it is God who gives it, not thy wiſdom, parts, or worth: *Eccl.*9.11. *favour is not alwaies to men of skill*: that is, not acceptation of what they doe, without a farther bleſſing from God. Therefore beſides the *gift of wiſdome*, he gave a further promiſe of *honour* alſo unto *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* 1.11. It is God who faſhions mens opinions. The Apoſtle prayes to God *his ſervice* might *be accepted of the Saints*, though no ſervice was like to be more acceptable; for it was the gathering and bringing in of almes and reliefe to them. It is he rules mens tongues, bids men bleſſe, as well as *he bade Shimei curſe*: and he hath kept thee from ſuch groſſe ſinnes, which as flies, would have *putrified the ointment of thy good name*, who alſo conceales thoſe thou haſt committed, and *hides thee from the ſtrife of tongues*, *Job* 5.21. Prov.22.1. Job.5.21.

Haſt thou friends, or doe any love thee? (wherein much of the comfort of our lives conſiſts, and therefore *David* ſayes of *Jonathan*, 2 *Sam.* 1.26. *Thou wert pleaſant to me*) it is God who gives favour in mens eyes, So he did *Joſeph*, *Gen.*39.21. If any man or creature doth thee a kindneſſe, he toucheth their hearts, (as it is ſaid of the men who clave to *Saul*) and viſits for thee; He made the *Ægyptians* beyond all reaſon the *Iſraelites friends*, gave them favour in their eyes, as the text tels us. And hence *Gen.* 33.10. *Jacob* ſayes, *He ſaw the face of God*, in reconciled *Eſaus* face, for Gods favour appeared in his look. He put you into your callings, ranks, and ſtations, gives you all your skill, ſucceſſe in them; The meaneſt of trades, to *ſow*, and *plough*, and *threſh*, they are *frō the Lord, who is wonderfull in working*, (*Eſay* 28. from the 23. to the end) even as well as the skill of the moſt curious Ingraver, Limbner, or Embroyderer (as of *Bezaleel*) the Scripture ſayes, God was his Maſter, taught him. Haſt thou enlarged parts and gifts for higher imployments? it is not thy *birth*, or *age* hath acquired them unto thee: *Job* 32.8.9. *Great men are not alwayes wiſe*, therefore it goes not by birth; *nor have* 2 Sam.1.26. Gen.33.10. Job2.8.9.

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the aged alwayes underſtanding, it goes not onely by experience? but *it is the inſpiration of the Almighty*. And haſt a calling anſwerable to thy parts, to be a Scholler, and have thy mind enriched and enobled with the beſt and choiſeſt jewell the world hath, wiſdome and knowledge; whereby the minde is elevated as much above other mens as they are above beaſts? God hath beene thy great *Tutor*, *The mind of man is Gods Candle*, and he maketh wiſer than a mans teachers, as he did *Moſes* in Egyptian learning, *Daniel*, *David*.

To conclude, haſt thou comfort in all theſe? in riches, learning, credit, wife, children, meat, drink, &c. He puts in all the ſugar, delight and pleaſure that eſpecially depends on him; even to faſhion the heart to all theſe. As ayre lights not without the Sunne, nor wood heats not without fire; ſo neither doth thy condition comfort thee without God. And therefore *Acts* 14.17. it is ſaid, *He filled their hearts, as with food, ſo, with gladneſſe.* Acts 14.17.

And beſides all theſe, conſider the many peculiar paſſages and turnings of his providence towards thee for thy good; the working of things together, ever and anon to doe thee a good turne; the packing and plotting all for thee, better than thou couldſt have plotted for thy ſelfe; as thy relief in many ſtraights ſucceſſe in many buſineſſes; He *workes all our workes in us and for us*, as *Eſay* ſpeaks, *Eſay* 26. hath he not taken ſuch ſpeciall care and providence of thee, as if he had regarded no man elſe in the world?

And now when thou haſt conſidered all, bethink thy ſelfe withall alittle of thy dealings towards him: what have been the effects and fruits of all this goodneſſe? hold up thy head man, looke God in the face. It is well yet, that ſhame begins to cover thee. How hath that his patience and long ſuffering, vouchſafing thee ſpace to repent, wrought with thee? how nigh to repentance hath it brought thee? Such is the perverſeneſſe of mans nature, as *Solomon* tels us, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. that *becauſe ſentence againſt an evill work is not preſently executed, therefore the hearts of the ſons of men are fully ſet to do evil:* Becauſe God defers puniſhing they defer repenting; thou thinkeſt to ſpend the moſt precious of thy time and ſtrength in ſinning, and give God the dregs, the bottome, the laſt ſands, thy dotage, which thy very ſelf and friends are weary of, and all theſe bleſſings and comforts which God hath vouchſafed Eccleſ. 8. 11.

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thee, how haſt thou uſed them againſt him? This oyle which ſhould have been fuell to thy thankfulneſſe, hath encreaſed the fire of thy luſts, and thy *luſts have conſumed them all*, *Jam.* 4. The riches he hath given, thou haſt made Idols of, and ſacrificed thy deareſt, morning, daily thoughts and affections unto, as God complaines, *Ezek.* 16. from the 15. and ſo on: [His meat] (as at the 29. verſ. he calls it) thou ſacrificedſt to *thy belly, which thou haſt made* thy God; thy ſtrength to women: the wealth he hath given you, you have made uſe of, but to live at a high rate of ſinning, and to procure the ſweeteſt bits, the daintieſt and moſt coſtly ſinnes; The edge of that ſword of power God hath put into thy hand, thou haſt turned againſt him and his, haply both his Children and Miniſters; ſo that God, by giving thee all theſe, hath but made thee more able to offend him, and hath ſtrengthned an enemy, and by ſparing thee thus long hath but made thee more bold to doe it; all his mercies have but fortified thy heart againſt him; *Doe ye requite the Lord thus, ye fooliſh people and unkind?* as *Moſes* expoſtulates the caſe, *Deut.* 32.6. as Chriſt ſaid to the Jewes, *For which of all my good workes doe ye ſtone me?* So ſay I to you, for which of all his mercies is it, ye ſin againſt him? what, to fight againſt him with his owne weapons? to betray all he gives you into the devills, his enemies hands? *What iniquity did you ever finde in him*, thus to deale? God will one day thus expoſtulate his cauſe with you, and *heape coales of fire upon all your heads*, (if that you turne not) becauſe you have *rendred him evill for good*: and all theſe mercies thus abuſed, will be as ſo many coales to make hell fire the hotter. And to reaſon this point yet further with you out of the Text, and what arguments it will afford to work upon you. Deut. 32.6.

Conſider, firſt, what it is thou doeſt; whileſt thus thou goeſt on, thou art a *Deſpiſer of the Riches of his goodneſſe*: that which is oppoſite to goodneſſe, muſt needs be tranſcendently evill. What, *art thou evill, becauſe God is good?* and ſo much the more evill, by how much more he is good, ſurely there muſt needs be an unexhauſted treaſure of wickedneſſe in thee, which will alſo cauſe in the end a treaſure of wrath in him, what and ſin againſt mercy, patience, long ſuffering, added to goodneſſe? of all attributes, as the richeſt to the moſt glorious: for it is that he

glories in: in the abuſing of which therefore he thinks himſelf moſt debaſed: of all attributes the tendereſt: what, kick againſt *his bowels?* ſo are his mercies called: canſt hit him no where elſe but there? to deſpiſe a mans wiſdom, power, learning, is not ſo much as to deſpiſe his love; what canſt thou imagine will become of thee, when thou commeſt to die? what is it thou wilt then come to plead and cry for? O mercy, mercy; why wretch that thou art, it is mercy thou haſt ſinned againſt. Riches of mercy and patience abuſed, turnes into fury. I may allude to that ſpeech,

1 Sam. 2. 25. 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *If a man ſinne againſt his brother, the Judge ſhall judge him; but if againſt God, who ſhall plead for him?* So hadſt thou ſinned againſt any other attribute, Mercy might have pleaded for thee; but if againſt Mercy it ſelfe, who ſhall?

Well, if thou goeſt on thus to doe ſo ſtill, thou haſt a *hard heart*; it argues the greateſt hardneſſe of all other; that is the ſecond. You uſe not (however it comes to paſſe) to deale thus with the worſt of men, ſinners like to your ſelves; but to them that love you, you tender love again, *Luke* 6. 33. and will you deal ſo with God? *Is it a ſmall thing to weary men, but you muſt weary*

Eſay 7. 13. *God alſo?* ſayes *Eſay*, 7. 13. He thought it infinitely leſſe to abuſe men than God; but you carry your ſelves as men, to men, but as devills towards God; herein ye have not the hearts of men in you; not principles of common humanity, whereby ye differ

Hoſ. 11. 6. from beaſts; The *cords of love are called the cords of a man*, *Hoſ.* 11. 6. the ſpirit of man breakes, melts under kindneſſe; beaſts indeed ye uſe to prick with goades, but the cords of a man are the cords of love; no principle being more deeply engraven in mens

Mat. 5. 46. hearts than this, *to do good to thoſe who doe good to you*, *Mat.* 5. 46. Nay, would ye had herein yet the hearts of beaſts; *The Oxe knows his owner, the Aſſe his maſters crib, but my people have rebelled againſt me.* A ſinne ſo much againſt nature, that he calls upon thoſe creatures, who have no more than meere nature in them,

Eſay 1. viz. *the heavens to ſtand aſtoniſht at it.* But as nature elevated by grace riſeth higher than it ſelfe; ſo being poyſoned with ſin, it is caſt below it ſelf; ſins againſt it ſelf, and the principles which are begotten in and with it ſelfe; if it were not ſo, how were it poſſible thou ſhouldeſt *hate him*, who never did thee hurt? and go on to wound him, who weepeth over thee? and deſpiſe that in him moſt,

moſt, which ſeeks to ſave thee? and load him with ſins? *Amos* 2. 13. who loades thee daily with his mercies, *Pſal.* 68. 19. Amos 2.13. Pſal. 68.19.

There is a third conſideration the text ſuggeſts, to ſhew the fearfulneſſe of thy ſinne in this reſpect; and that is, that thou goeſt on every minute ſinning and in impenitency, by deſpiſing his goodneſſe, to treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath; to ſinne againſt mercy, of all other encreaſeth wrath; thou muſt pay treaſures; for treaſures ſpent. As thou laviſhly ſpendeſt riches of mercy, ſo God will recover riches of glory out of thee: God will not loſe by thee, but will reckon with thee in wrath for *every offer* of patience ſpent; for every ſand of long ſuffering that runnes out, he drops in a drop of wrath into his Vialls, and it will prove a treaſure, ſuch a treaſure as ſhall bring in an eternall revenue of glory unto God, of all his glory loſt, and riches ſpent, with advantage; ſuch a treaſure, as will aske an eternity of time to be ſpent upon thee, and yet be never emptied or made leſſe; and the longer thou goeſt on, the greater heap it will ſwell unto. And doſt thou know and conſider how faſt this treaſure fills, and how much the longer thou goeſt on to adde to it, ſtill the more thou addeſt, ſtill the laſt yeere more then all the yeers before? every minutes impenitency adding to this heap and ſumme, as new figures added in a ſumme uſe to doe; the firſt is but one, the ſecond makes it ten, the third an hundred, the fourth a thouſand, and what a ſumme will this grow to?

Ay but thou wilt ſay, Tuſh, I am in proſperity, in health, wealth, and eaſe, and to day ſhall be as to morrow, and much more abundant, *Eſay* 56. 12. Well, but fourthly, conſider out of the text, that there will come a day at laſt, the morrow whereof will be a *day of wrath:* It is treaſuring up now, but is not brought forth till the day of wrath, till which day thou mayeſt goe on and proſper, as *Job* giving us the reaſon why wicked men proſper here, ſayes, Chap. 21. They are *reſerved to the day of wraths*, in the plurall, becauſe treaſures are laid up againſt then; thou art yet ſpared, becauſe thy ſinnes are not yet full, and that treaſure is not full, as the ſinnes of the *Amorites* were not; and all this thy preſent proſperitie fits thee but for hell. So *Rom.* 9. 22. they are ſaid to be veſſells *fitted for deſtruction*, by long ſuffering. And

ſo *Nahum* tels us, they are but as *ſtubble* laid out in the Sunne a drying, till it be *fully dry*, *Nah.* 1. 10. that it may burne the better; and like grapes that are let to hang in the Sunſhine till they be ripe, *Rev.* 15. 16. and ſo thou for the *winepreſſe of Gods wrath.*

But thy ſenſeleſſe heart may hap to ſay, I ſee no ſuch thing, and theſe are but threats, I thinke ſo; therefore it is ſaid in the Text, that it is a *Treaſure*; which, as Treaſures uſe to be, is hid till that day comes, and then *revealed*, as the words have it. For though thou ſeeſt not this day a comming, yet God who ſits in heaven, ſees thy day a comming, as *David* ſayes, *Pſal.* 37. 13. who is therefore ſaid to ſee it, becauſe himſelf ſees it not; and it
2 Pet. 2. 3. is comming faſter than thou art aware of it, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. *Damnation ſlumbereth not*, though thou dreameſt not of it; *lingreth not*: as an hue and cry, it is ſent out, and is on its courſe, and will in the end overtake thee, and that when thou leaſt thinkeſt of it, *as a theefe in the night*, when thou art aſleepe, yet dreameſt not of it,
2 Theſ. 5. 2 *Theſ.* 5. when thou art leaſt prepared for it, as in the old world, when they were eating and drinking: as God watcheth when his childe is at the beſt and ripeſt, and then takes him; ſo he will watch thee to take thee for thy neglect, at the worſt, and give thee haply no time to prepare; they goe downe to hell in a moment, *Pſal.* 73. 9.

FINIS.